DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 483 020 TM 035 305

AUTHOR	Neufeld, Barbara; Woodworth, Katrina
TITLE	Taking Stock: The Status of Implementation and the Need for Further Support in the BPE-BAC Cohort I and II Schools.
INSTITUTION	Education Matters, Inc., Cambridge, MA.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2000-07-00
NOTE	121p.; Written with assistance from Mary Bodwell, Jennifer Boothby, Jessica Evans, Guiomar Garcia, Margaret McConchie, and Julie Stewart. Support also provided by the Boston Annenberg Challenge. Appendices are not included in the ERIC version of this document.
CONTRACT	R215U7008
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Cohort Analysis; Educational Research; *Evaluation Research; *Program Implementation

ABSTRACT

Education Matters' working hypothesis in this report was that the quality of implementation of ILT (Instructional Leadership Teams) and LASW (Looking At Student Work) groups is related to the quality of implementation of other components of reform. Specifically, the authors anticipated that schools in which ILTs and LASW groups were well-established would show considerable evidence of a collegial collaborative culture--including teacher leadership--that focused on instruction. And, they proposed that such schools would be better positioned to implement additional components of reform, for example, performance assessments. The data analysis by the authors supports this hypothesis. Schools with high-functioning ILTs and LASW groups had better established collegial, collaborative, instructionally-focused cultures than did schools with lower-functioning ILTs and LASW groups. These schools demonstrated greater in-school capacity to take on the work of implementing performance assessments than schools with low-functioning ILTs and LASW groups. As a result of this analysis, in light of the theory of reform that guides Boston's school improvements work, these schools are now well-positioned to continue improving teaching and thereby, student learning and measured achievement. Appended are: (1) Boston Public Schools Plan for Whole-School Change; Boston Plan for Excellence Expectations for Performance-Based Assessment; (3) Boston Public Schools Assessment System Based on Learning Standards and High Expectations; (4) Self-Assessment Summary; (5) Phases Chart, 1998; and (6) Up-Date and Phases Chart, 2000. (Author/MA)

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DIP29937 TM

ED 483 020

Taking Stock:

The Status of Implementation and the Need for Further Support in the BPE-BAC Cohort I and II Schools

July 2000

written by

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Support for this work was provided by grants from OERI (#R215U7008) and the Boston Annenberg Challenge

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since September 1996, a set of schools known as Cohort I has been implementing a whole-school change effort that began as the Boston Plan for Excellence's (BPE) 21st Century Schools program. The reform, based on a set of "Essentials," was designed to include components and activities likely to help schools improve teaching and learning. The BPE intended to support Cohort I schools for four years after which time it assumed that the reforms would be well-institutionalized and schools would be able to continue to work in new ways that keep them focused on continually improving teaching and learning. When Boston received an Annenberg Challenge grant in the spring of 1997, a second set of schools, Cohort II, began to implement the same "whole-school change" effort that was also to continue for four years.[2] In November 1997, the Boston Public Schools (BPS) adopted the Essentials as the strategy for implementing school improvement in all BPS schools.[3] Cohort III schools began implementation in September 1998 while Cohort IV schools began in September 1999.[4]

The reform designed by the BPE in conjunction with the BPS and adopted by the BAC and BPS has an underlying theory of action.[5] It begins with the straightforward hypothesis that improved instruction will improve student achievement. Then it postulates that the way to achieve improved instruction is to support teachers at their school sites as they learn in collaboration with one another. Collaborative learning is to be facilitated by asking teachers and principals to engage in specific activities, called Essentials, which, when undertaken with skillful support, help to change the social structure of each school. The goal is to have people work together in such a way that they come to share common language, common practices, and common goals for their students. The activities associated with the Essentials help school staff a) recognize their own learning needs as well as those of their students, b) learn to reorganize time, student groupings, staff, and resources, and c) direct their attention to the measurement of student progress. The Essentials lead teachers and principals to focus initially on one content area, most often literacy, and research "best practices" in that area. Their research and adoption of "best practices" involve them in attending to the specific content to be taught as well as its alignment with state and district standards. Finally, the theory asserts that schools cannot undertake this work by themselves. Rather, they need leadership within the school and external support because the work is complicated, difficult and often threatening. As a result, virtually all of the funding provided to schools by the BPE-BAC is for professional development designed to a) integrate teachers' learning with their practice, b) give teachers ongoing feedback about their practice, and c) make these activities a whole-school, collegial endeavor.

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[2] Cohort II schools were initially directed by a Boston Annenberg Challenge (BAC) Director with fiscal management of the BAC grant the responsibility of the BPE. In June 1999, the BPS, BPE and BAC decided to create one organization, the BPE-BAC, which would have responsibility for reform implementation in Cohorts I and II. For this reason, Education Matters, with the agreement of the BPE-BAC, is preparing one update report that reflects the progress of reform in both Cohorts I and II.

[3] See Appendix A for the Plan for Whole-School Change which describes the Essentials.

[4] From the outset, one goal of the BPE's work, with the agreement of Superintendent Dr. Thomas Payzant, was to provide the BPS with strategies it could use to implement whole-school change districtwide in additional cohorts of schools.

[5] Donald Schon used this term in his book, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*, New York: Basic Books, 1982. During the first several years of the national Annenberg Challenge, he was instrumental in helping develop a theory of action for the entire enterprise.

Education Matters, Inc. has been evaluating the progress of the BPE's 21st Century Schools program since the spring of 1997; it began evaluating the BAC during the next school year. We have produced four prior reports on implementation of school reform in Boston (July 1998, February 1999, July 1999, and April 2000). Each of these reports attended to the early stages of implementing different aspects of the school reform model, for example, coaching, literacy programs, and the partnership between the BPE and the BPS. This report is designed to enable the BPE-BAC to take stock of the status of implementation of the Essentials at the end of the four-year period of intensive funding for Cohort I schools. It is designed to assist the BPE-BAC in considering what kinds of supports to provide to a) Cohort I schools in light of more limited funding resources, and b) Cohort II schools as they enter their fourth and final year of intensive funding. And, finally, it is designed to help the BPS as it a) continues intensive implementation of the Plan for Whole-School Change in Cohorts III and IV, and b) becomes more involved with Cohort I schools during the 2000-2001 schoolyear as a result of diminished BPE support for these schools.

In order to take stock, we attended to two aspects of the Essentials that the theory argues need to be strongly established in order for schools to have the capacity to sustain their focus on instruction: the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and the Looking at Student Work (LASW) groups. Both of these components and the processes attached to them are designed to contribute to the collegial, collaborative, instructionally focused culture that the reform intends to establish in the schools.

ILTs. At the start of participating in Cohort I or II, schools were required to establish ILTs, structures through which schools would have teacher and administrator representation in identifying an instructional focus and selecting ways to address that focus through professional development and other activities. The idea was that ILT members, who ideally a) had a solid and growing understanding of the reform, and b) represented each team, cluster, department, and/or grade level, would get input from teachers on instructional issues that they would share in focused discussions at the ILT meetings. ILT meeting agendas would be shaped by teachers' and administrators' concerns and questions with respect to the school's instructional focus. ILT members would report back to their constituents on the ILT's decisions. Through this process, the whole school would have input into the reform and would shape its particular incarnation at their school. The theory posits that a school with a well-functioning ILT would be in a strong position to develop focused, formal professional development programs that included collegial work groups focusing on improving instruction, for example, LASW groups.

LASW Groups. All Cohort I schools were required to establish grade-level, team, or cluster LASW groups during the first year of reform and most were provided with at least some professional development on how to do this work. Cohort II schools were asked to implement LASW during the first year, but did not necessarily have professional development related to this component of their work. LASW is intended to help teachers use work produced by their own students to make informed decisions about their instruction. Its implementation is structured by the use of a protocol that directs teachers' attention to a) the students' **work** (rather than the students themselves), b) the standards to be addressed by the assignment, c) the quality of the students' work considered against a rubric reflecting those standards, and d) what needs to happen next in the classroom if the work is to improve. In our July 15, 1998, evaluation report we wrote:

> The BPE has consistently made clear that they expect looking at student work (LASW) to be a central component of schools' professional development. The purpose has also been clear: to stimulate instructional improvement by using discoveries made when looking at work to plan instruction, choose professional development, and establish annual goals. (p. 30)

We chose to focus on implementation of the ILTs and LASW groups, then, because these two components of reform were a) tied to the Essentials, b) established early in the process of reform, and c) intended to continue beyond the four years of intensive funding. They were, in other words, intended to become part of the standard operating procedures of schools.

Our working hypothesis was that the quality of implementation of the ILT and LASW groups would be related to the quality of implementation of other components of the reform. In other words, we posited that schools where the ILT and LASW groups were well-established and well-functioning should have made considerable progress in creating collegial, collaborative cultures that focused on instruction. As such, they might be better positioned than schools without well-established and well-functioning ILTs and LASW groups to implement additional components of reform. To test the hypothesis, we looked at the extent and quality of 1) implementation of performance-based assessments during the 1999-2000 schoolyear, and 2) teacher leadership for reform in light of how well schools' ILTs and LASW groups were functioning.[6]

Performance-Based Assessments. Performance-based assessments are measures of student achievement collected several times during the schoolyear and designed to provide teachers and school-based administrators with information about student progress. According to BPS documents, the tasks embedded in performance assessments are those "that require students to construct responses to a problem or task," and in which "students may devise and revise strategies, organize data, identify patterns, evaluate partial and tentative solutions, and justify their answers" (See Appendix C). With respect to writing, schools were asked either to develop common, open-ended, MCAS-like prompts or use questions developed by the district to assess students' writing skills at least twice each year. With respect to reading, schools were to use individually administered, diagnostic instruments such as the Record of Oral language at kindergarten, the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) in grades 1-3 and the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) in grades 4-9.

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[6] The BPE was instrumental in influencing the BPS to implement performance-based assessments. During the 1998-1999 schoolyear, the BPE required Cohort I schools to collect performance-based assessments in reading and writing three times. The results of this work were so encouraging that the BPE was able to convince the BPS to have schools begin to collect and use performance-based assessments to inform ongoing instruction. See Appendix B for correspondence about BPE expectations for performance-based assessment during the 1998-1999 schoolyear. Performance-based assessments were mandated by the BPS, for the first time, during the 1999-2000 schoolyear.

Such assessments are potentially valuable because schools can use the findings to make mid-course corrections in light of good data about student learning. Individual teachers can use performance-based assessment results to make decisions about next steps in their own classrooms. Cross-class and grade analyses of performance-based assessment data can help teachers and school-based administrators determine weaknesses and strengths in the entire school's instructional program. Armed with such information, individual teachers and the whole school faculty can make decisions about areas of instruction that need improvement. The information can be used a) to set achievement goals for the school, and b) to direct the use of professional development funds.[7] We wanted to know whether the quality of performance-based assessment implementation, a key component of the Essentials, was associated with the quality and depth with which schools were implementing their ILTs and LASW groups. We hypothesized that there would be an association because schools with well-developed ILTs and LASW groups would have established the in-school capacity to take on the work of schooltime performance assessment.[8]

Teacher Leadership. Finally, we wanted to address issues associated with the establishment of internal school capacity for the continuing leadership of reform. The theory underlying the BPE-BAC reform states that schools need leadership from within if the reforms are to be sustained schooltime. Schools cannot remain reliant solely on external coaches and other literacy support professionals. Principals must provide one source of internal leadership; teachers must provide another. Without widespread teacher knowledge, skill and leadership of the reforms, schools run the risk of having reform in a segment of the school rather than in the school as a whole, and they become vulnerable if there is a loss of one or more key individuals. In Cohort I and II schools, teachers can hold newly established leadership positions by virtue of serving on the ILT, leading LASW sessions, and working as literacy coordinators, for example. Teachers in leadership positions created by the negotiated contract, such as Lead Teachers can also take on new roles as a result of the whole-school change agenda. We examined the status of teacher leadership in Cohort I and II schools as yet another indicator of schools' development of a collegial, collaborate culture with the capacity to nurture and sustain instructionally focused reform. We also wanted to know what conditions support teacher leadership in schools as well as what challenges teachers face as they take on leadership roles.

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[7] It is important to note that performance-based assessments, in the Boston context, were "formative." That is, they were intended to inform instruction. They were not initially to be used in a "summative" fashion, for example, to make promotion and retention decisions. However, during the schoolyear, the performance-based assessments in reading, in particular, became linked to the BPS promotion and retention policy. See Appendix C for documents related to this use of the performance-based assessments.

[8] At the same time, we recognized that some schools without well-established ILTs and LASW groups might be able to do a reasonable job implementing performance-based assessments because the implementation was structured by the BPS. We thought that an analysis based on these assumptions could provide meaningful insight into the status of implementation and the kinds of support needed by the schools.

Sources of Data for this Report. With the BPE-BAC/BPS theory of action in mind, in August 1999 Education Matters researchers met with the BPE-BAC leadership to develop a focused evaluation plan for the 1999-2000 schoolyear. We described our interest in attending to capacity building within the schools and our desire to focus on ILTs, LASW groups and the implementation of performance-based assessments. With the agreement of the BPE-BAC leadership, Education Matters researchers then developed a set of evaluation questions and designed a data collection and analysis strategy for the 1999-2000 schoolyear. Our evaluation questions were:

1. What is the relationship between the quality and extent of implementation of two long-standing components of the Essentials of Whole-School Change – ILTs and LASW groups – and schools' capacity to productively collect and use performance-based assessment data? What factors lead to differences in the quality and extent of implementation of each of these components of reform?

2. What is the status of teacher leadership in Cohort I and II schools with respect to establishing a collegial, instructionally-focused culture? How, in what ways, and to what extent is teacher leadership associated with the quality and extent of implementation of ILTs and LASW groups?

3. What is the impact of these findings for establishing the collegial, instructionally focused school cultures that will lead to greater student achievement?

4. What can the BPE-BAC and the BPS do to strengthen implementation of the Essentials of Whole-School Change?

With these questions in mind, we engaged in the following data collection activities.[9]

1. Observed two or three ILT meetings in the fall and again in the spring at our sample schools.
2. Observed LASW sessions in the fall and again in the spring at our sample schools.

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[9] Our sample includes seven Cohort I and five Cohort II schools. In addition, we have three Cohort III schools in which we collect data that focuses on the Boston Public Schools' (BPS) role in implementing Whole-School Change. And, we collect data from a sample of four Pilot Schools. This report focuses on the work of K-5, K-8, and 6-8 schools in Cohorts I and II. In a later report, we will discuss issues of Whole-School Change in the high schools and the ways in which the Pilot Schools are grappling with improving teaching, learning, and assessment.

3. Interviewed teachers and administrators from our sample schools.
4. Interviewed whole-school change (WSC) and content coaches and other teacher leaders/staff developers. (Included non-sample school coaches in these interviews.)
5. Interviewed BPE-BAC leadership.
6. Observed a sample of LASW site facilitator meetings.
7. Observed a sample of coach meetings.
8. Observed a sample of principal network meetings.
9. Observed most Annenberg Working Group (AWG) meetings.
10. Read relevant BPE-BAC and BPS documents.

For the most part, we were able to implement all of the observations and interviews planned for the year.[10] Overall, we a) completed 151 teacher interviews, 39 school-based administrator interviews, 26 coach interviews, and interviews with all key individuals at the BPE-BAC, b) observed 34 ILT and 11 LASW sessions,[11] c) eight coach meetings, four principal networking meetings, three LASW site facilitator meetings, and six AWG meetings. Teachers, principals and others were generous with their time. We thank them for their contributions to our understanding of the difficult and important work in which they are engaged.

To address our evaluation questions, we first completed a school-by-school analysis of the quality of ILT implementation using a sample of criteria suggested by the BPE-BAC. These included:

> 1) the significance of roles played by teachers in setting the ILT agenda and decision making;
> 2) the frequency with which ILT meetings are teacher led;
> 3) the amount of cross-grade instructional talk;
> 4) the schooltime follow-up that results from the meetings;
> 5) the significance of the ILT to non-members and within the school as a whole;
> 6) extent to which teachers ask hard questions about implementing reform; and
> 7) the role of the principal as a member of the team as well as an instructional leader.[12]

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[10] We were unable to observe ILT and LASW meetings late in the spring when the teachers' work-to-rule action led some schools to cancel these activities.

[11] We were unable to attend a greater number of LASW group meetings for two main reasons. First, some schools did not do LASW this year; instead, they used the time allotted for LASW to score writing performance assessments. Second, some schools in our sample do not have regularly scheduled LASW meetings. When we had arranged to observe a scheduled LASW meeting and arrived at the school, we sometimes learned that the meeting agenda had changed from LASW to something else. A third, and less significant factor, was the teacher work-to-rule action that led some schools to stop what would have been regularly scheduled LASW groups.

[12] We and the BPE-BAC are also concerned about the role of parents on the ILT. We do not have sufficient data, however, with which to address the role of parents on the ILT.

Second, we analyzed the quality of LASW implementation using a sample of the guiding questions included on the BPE-BAC School Assessment Summary (SAS) document for spring 2000.[13] In particular, we wanted to know:

1) What type of work are teams examining?
2) What protocol do the teams use? Is it the same for every team? Has everyone received training in the protocol?
3) Who facilitates each session (coach, principal, teacher, varies)?
4) Are teachers looking at student work in relation to standards? What standards are being used?
5) What are the discussions like? Do they focus on the scoring of the work? Has the conversation moved to instruction? Has instruction changed as a result of the sessions?
6) Has LASW led to any professional development?
7) How often do LASW teams meet and how long do these meetings last?
8) Does the principal-headmaster participate in LASW sessions?

Third, we analyzed the implementation of performance-based assessments in each school based on a) BPS requirements, and b) the description of this work found in the Plan for Whole-School Change and the "Phase Chart" which describes levels of implementation of the Essentials. In August 1999, the BPS provided all principals and headmasters with a document that described Boston's approach to building an "assessment system that would support the primary district goal of improving student achievement."[14] The document described how the district "will expand our assessment system to include ongoing, *school and classroom-based,* formative assessments." Such assessments in reading, writing and mathematics were to be aligned with standards and administered at specific times during the schoolyear. We analyzed the data to determine a) whether and how schools collected the data multiple times, b) what kinds of grade-level/cluster/team discussions took place around the data, c) the extent to which it was used to determine instructional needs across the school and in individual classrooms, and d) the extent to which it led to changes in the instructional program.

And, fourth, we considered the status of teacher leadership in each of the schools. As we wrote above, Boston's theory of reform envisions teachers becoming more knowledgeable about teaching and learning and taking increased responsibility for continuously shaping and leading whole-school change in light of standards and their students' educational needs. Therefore, Boston's Plan for Whole-School Change identifies teacher leadership in the various aspects of the reform work as evidence of "on-going improvement" (i.e., Phase 3) of the reform work. In light of this, we analyzed our data to determine the extent to which teachers had significant roles on the ILT, facilitated LASW groups, and worked with colleagues as literacy coordinators, for example. Then, we explored a) how the status of teacher leadership was associated with implementation of the ILT and LASW groups, and b) the conditions that supported and challenges that hindered teacher leadership.

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[13] We include this document as Appendix D.

[14] This quote and the rest of the description of the BPS assessment system is taken from a document called, "Assessment System Based on Learning Standards and High Expectations." This document, attached as Appendix C, was given to principals and headmasters at their August 1999 retreat prior to the start of the schoolyear. Attached as Appendix E is the "Phase Chart" that describes characteristics of the different phases of implementation of the Essentials.

In beginning our data analysis, we anticipated differences in our findings as a result of several organizational factors: 1) whether schools were in Cohort I or II, 2) the degree of implementation of their literacy programs, and 3) the coaching support available to the schools. We expected, for example, that because Cohort I schools had considerably more professional development focused on LASW than Cohort II schools, they might be more advanced in their implementation of this work. In contrast, we anticipated that some Cohort II schools might be further advanced with using data to make instructional decisions because measuring student progress had been a greater focus in Cohort II than in Cohort I during the 1998-1999 schoolyear. However, in completing this analysis we found no fundamental implementation differences related to whether schools were in Cohort I or II.[15] In addition, we found no differences related to grade-level organization – K-5, K-8, 6-8. Therefore, we consider the schools together for purposes of this analysis.

We found some differences that relate to the organization and implementation of the school's literacy focus. This is not surprising since, initially, it was the literacy instructional focus that formed the context for engaging teachers in a) thinking differently about their instruction, b) learning new strategies, c) looking at student data from, for example, running records, and d) working together in professional development programs. It was the literacy programs that created formal teacher leadership positions and new roles for teacher leaders vis a vis their colleagues. It was the instructional focus on literacy that led schools to restructure so that teachers could have common planning time and longer planning periods in which to examine student work. Regardless of cohort affiliation, schools now are at different stages with respect to implementing their literacy focus. They vary in the extent to which all or even most of their teachers have bought-in to the focus and its concomitant activities. Schools in which teachers are still arguing about or resisting the literacy program they have chosen do not demonstrate the same level of schooltime conversations focused on instruction as do schools that have greater agreement about the literacy program.[16] However, variation in implementation of the literacy focus is not related to cohort.

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[15] It is possible that there are cohort differences in implementing these Essentials that we missed because our sample of schools is small – we have six Cohort I and four Cohort II schools in this analysis. We do not include the two sample high schools due to extensive variation in their implementation of the reform activities that would reveal their identities.

Finally, we know that coaches have played an essential role in the extent to which ILTs and LASW groups function well. They have had significant roles in implementing performance-based assessments during the 1999-2000 schoolyear. Coaches have a deep understanding of the status of reform in their schools and we have written about their importance to the ongoing work of reform in each of our previous reports. We continue to stress that they are essential to the further development of school-based capacity for instructional improvement. However, as with literacy, we do not focus explicitly on coaches in this report. Instead, we include the coaches' voices in our analyses in order to better understand the components of reform to which we are directing our attention.[17]

Overview of the Findings. Education Matters' working hypothesis was that the quality of implementation of the ILT and LASW groups would be related to the quality of implementation of other components of the reform. Specifically, we anticipated that schools in which ILTs and LASW groups were well-established we would see considerable evidence of a collegial collaborative culture – including teacher leadership – that focused on instruction. And, we proposed that such schools should be better positioned to implement additional components of reform, for example, performance assessments.

Our data analysis supports this hypothesis. Schools with high-functioning ILTs and LASW groups had better established collegial, collaborative, instructionally-focused cultures than did schools with lower functioning ILTs and LASW groups. They had teacher leaders who supported implementation of the Essentials. And, these schools demonstrated greater in-school capacity to take on the work of implementing performance assessments than schools with low-functioning ILTs and LASW groups. Our longitudinal data lead us to conclude that, with one possible exception, these schools did not have comparable structures in place prior to implementing the Essentials and they did not have teachers in so many leadership positions. As a result of our analysis, in light of the theory of reform that guides Boston's school improvement work, these schools are now well-positioned to continue improving teaching and, thereby, student learning and measured achievement. The remainder of the report details the evidence for these conclusions and, where appropriate, suggests strategies for strengthening implementation of the Essentials.

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[16] We have written about the importance of the literacy focus in previous reports. For example, in Neufeld and Woodworth, July 1998, we wrote: "The literacy models facilitate a coherent, ongoing discussion of literacy instruction. Teachers report that this focused strategy is a strong influence on their teaching. We have learned from coaches and from teachers that the focus enables teachers to work together toward a common goal... In schools without a literacy model, teachers and principals report devoting their professional development time to specific tasks...which may or may not be directly connected to the instructional focus" (pp. 52-53). Although we do not focus on the implementation of the literacy programs *per se*, we think it is important to note that they were the first schoolwide effort undertaken by the schools.

[17] Some principals have chosen to work without a whole-school change coach, some principals do not want to make important changes that the coach suggests, and some schools have had a number of different coaches over time. Each of these situations can lead to what we consider to be insufficient coaching.

Organization of the Report. We begin Section II of this report with a discussion of our findings about the relationship between the quality and extent of implementation of ILTs and LASW groups and the quality and extent of implementation and use of performance-based assessment data. The section has three parts. In the first, we describe the four types of ILTs found in our sample and explore the factors associated with each type. In the second part, we describe the four types of LASW groups, pointing out the ways in which the factors associated with ILT type are quite similar to those associated with LASW type. To demonstrate the distinguishing characteristics of each type of ILT and LASW group, we created composite descriptions of how each functions. These were drawn from observation data collected during the school year as well as from teacher, coach, and principal interviews. In the third part of Section II, we analyze the ways in which schools implemented the performance-based assessments and, again, connect the quality and depth of implementation to factors associated with the type of ILT and LASW groups.

In Section III, we focus on the status of teacher leadership in Cohort I and II schools and the factors associated with the supports for and challenges of implementing these new roles. Having considered the implementation and development of these Essentials of reform, in Section IV we discuss the status of whole-school change implementation across the schools and the ways in which the reform's theory of action is developing in practice. We review factors that seem to lead to the differences we have detailed. And, in light of those factors, we consider what additional and/or different supports it will take to enable teachers and school-based administrators to work collegially to make decisions and implement instructional practices that will lead to greater student achievement.

II. CONNECTING THE STATUS OF ILTS AND LASW GROUPS WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENTS

This section of the report has three parts. In the first, Part A, we present our analysis of the quality of ILT implementation at our sample schools based on the set of criteria identified previously (see page 6). These criteria drew our attention primarily to a) the roles played by teachers and principals with respect to the ILT – setting the agenda, participating during the meetings, and following-up with issues after the meetings, b) the content and quality of the discussions, and c) the significance of the ILT to non-members. Using the criteria, we assigned each school to a "type" of ILT based on the quality of implementation. Part A describes the types and the factors that distinguish one type from another.

In Part B, we do a similar analysis with respect to the quality of implementation of LASW groups using the criteria listed on pages six and seven. These criteria drew our attention to a) the roles played by principals in supporting LASW groups, b) the quality and content of the discussions during LASW sessions, c) teacher, principal, and/or coach support for this work, and d) evidence of links between LASW sessions and teachers' practice. Again, using the criteria, we assigned each school to a type of LASW implementation based on the quality of implementation. With two exceptions, our data resulted in schools being assigned to the same ILT and LASW group types. In other words, schools tended to be high or low functioning in both of these components of whole-school change. At the end of Part B, we provide a summary of our findings and an analysis of factors associated with the schools' progress.

In Part C, we consider the ways in which schools went about implementing performance-based assessments during the 1999-2000 school year. We wanted to know whether the quality of their ILT and LASW groups would be associated with the quality with which they implemented the performance-based assessments. As we indicated earlier in this report, such associations would help the BPE-BAC and the BPS understand the extent to which the model of whole-school change and the theory undergirding it were borne out by the data. Our analysis suggests that the theory is supported by the data. In other words, schools with high functioning ILTs and LASW groups had better established collegial, collaborative, instructionally-focused cultures than did schools with lower functioning ILTs and LASW groups. As a result, they had more in-school capacity to take on the work of implementing performance-based assessments. We do not create another set of "types" in this section of the report. Rather, we present the data that lead us to this conclusion and then discuss some fundamental issues associated with this first large-scale implementation of performance-based assessments.

A: Instructional Leadership Teams. Schools vary considerably in the extent to which their ILTs operate in ways deemed fundamental by the BPE-BAC (see list on page 6), but they fall into four distinct types that we feel correspond with their position along a continuum of effectively implementing ILTs. In order to present the variation, we created vignettes that are composites of the features of each type of ILT. Each composite represents at least two schools in our sample. We turn now to a description and analysis of this variation. At the end of this part of the report, we summarize what we have learned and offer explanations for the variations.

Type 1 ILTs. A few schools had Type 1 ILTs, indicating a very early stage of implementation as the following composite indicates.

> ***Composite Type 1 ILTs.***[18] These ILT meetings were brief (one hour or less) and scheduled somewhat irregularly. Members, who seemed not to take the start times seriously, consistently arrived late, some as the meetings were ending. The principal set the agendas and led all of the meetings we observed. There were no formal roles for teachers such as recorder or timekeeper. There was little teacher talk, except occasional requests for clarification. The purpose of the meetings seemed to be for the principal to impart information to teachers. However, there was no mention of ILT members going back to their teams to glean their colleagues' perspective on the information. There was rarely any follow-up at subsequent meetings to issues previously discussed.
>
> The principal's orientation to the whole-school change agenda seemed to be one of compliance. For example, in explaining the In-Depth-Review (IDR) process, the principal said: "One of the reasons we got started with this whole business of the Essentials is because we knew this [IDR] was coming." The principal did not, in contrast, talk about the importance of the Essentials for improving teaching and learning. The concept of SMART goals was introduced to the ILT in late October 1999 when the principal shared goals she had written for the school.[19] No doubt as a result of being excluded from involvement in such discussions, teachers' level of understanding of these goals and the Essentials appeared to be quite limited. For example, they were confused about the difference between norm-referenced assessments and assessments scored against performance levels in light of standards.
>
> When, on occasion, the principal attempted to discuss instructional issues, discussions faltered due to a) ineffective facilitation of the discussion, and b) teachers' lack of participation. Once, for example, when the principal posed a question to start a discussion about how to increase the use of balanced literacy instructional strategies there was little teacher response. One teacher said that she would be interested in seeing videos of strategies. When the coach asked if it would be better to see a classroom demonstration, the teacher said she preferred the video. This could have been an opportunity to discuss the role of the coach in helping the school develop its literacy focus or even to discuss what strategies the teachers really wanted to learn about, but the conversation did not happen that way. On two other occasions, teachers expressed concerns about a) protecting time for LASW and b) teachers not looking at student work. The principal did not pick-up on these topics and they were dropped. The coach made several attempts to push the instructional conversation, but she did not get very far since her efforts were not supported by the principal.

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[18] We remind the reader that the examples of ILTs are composites drawn from observation and interview data collected at several schools.

[19] This was contrary to the processes envisioned for the ILT and to the directions the Superintendent gave at the Leadership Conference in August 1999. At that time, the Superintendent made it clear that principals were to set the five goals with their teachers after collaboratively reviewing data and emphasized the importance of teacher ownership of the goals.

This composite of Type 1 ILTs demonstrates a) the absence of significant teacher input into the agenda or facilitation of the meetings, b) the dominance of the principal in setting the agenda and leading the meetings, c) the rarity of teachers' voices in discussions of the issues brought by the principal or in raising other issues, d) the absence of cross-grade instructional talk, and e) no clear attention to any follow-up from the meetings. Rather than ask hard questions, teachers are silent or only occasionally participate in discussions. ILT members are not expected to report back to their teams/clusters nor are they expected to bring issues from their colleagues to the ILTs. Teachers' occasional efforts to raise issues important to them are not built-upon by the principal. Type 1 ILTs are not places where teachers and principals come together to direct their attention to the school's instructional focus and plan for professional development. There is no evidence in these meetings of strong understanding of the whole-school change reform agenda.

Principal and teacher comments confirm the limited focus of the meetings.[20] First, principals of schools with Type 1 ILTs were unable to identify key accomplishments of their ILTs. The first principal cannot remember anything specific accomplished by the ILT even though she notes that it brings people together to talk about instruction.[21]

> I wish I had my notes. Well, one thing, [the ILT] has broad representation. ...The basic thing is that it's brought people together to talk about instruction, and it's given [us] a forum for instructional issues. We don't tend to get off on discipline. We've talked a lot about leveled books, [about getting] more leveled books. (Administrator A)

A second principal, similarly, cannot recall ILT accomplishments without recourse to notes, and she realizes, as a result of our question, that ILT members might be in a similar quandary. Her comments also reveal the fact that the ILT has responded to items defined by the principal rather than to issues raised by the principals and teachers.

> I wish I were able to say, "These are the five things that the ILT's accomplished." I would have to do some deep thinking or look through my notes. But the reality of it is that any number of things have been supported by my initiatives or my thinking about this or that. And so [the ILT members] might feel the same way – "Gee we don't know what we've accomplished." That might be a very good wrap up activity at the end of the year – looking back and highlighting so that people don't feel like we wasted another year. (Administrator B)

For the most part, teachers at these schools shared their principals' perspective on the ILTs accomplishments. And, they confirmed our observation and interview data by reporting the limited role they had in shaping the ILT agenda or conversation.

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[20] Teacher and school-based administrator comments have been selected from the set of the schools represented by each type of ILT.

[21] To preserve confidentiality, we use pseudonyms and the pronoun "she" for each individual in our sample.

> It's being run by [the principal] so there's not even an opportunity to necessarily bring issues. The agenda is laid out completely by her and it's pretty filled. We talk about whats she wants us to talk about and that's about it. I think that the ILT is not necessarily a discussion place for us, or it's not perceived as that. I do not perceive [that] I can go to her and say, "The ILT is this Wednesday. I really am having a problem with whatever. Can we discuss it?" I would never. She has the agenda and this is what we talk about. (Teacher A)

Comments from teachers who were members of Type 1 ILTs, unlike those of the principals, reveal that ILTs discussed implementing performance-based assessments. However, we have no data to suggest that members were involved in discussions of the resulting data and its implications for either professional development and/or instruction. The next teacher comment reveals that, in addition to having a weak ILT, a school with a Type 1 ILT may be at a very early stage of implementing its literacy focus, despite having chosen it four years ago.

> The major things that the ILT has accomplished this year is basically getting through the assessment; coming up with an initial plan for getting everyone on board with guided reading and a balanced approach to literacy. We all agree upon that. [We agreed] to there being a need for a general place for our teachers to get [access to] guided reading books [so they could] make reading more individualized for students. ... And basically coming up with one mission, as far as the school's concerned, as far as like literacy is our number one goal here. Those are our major accomplishments. (Teacher B)

Teachers in schools with Type 1 ILTs may be aware of how an ILT should function and the issues that should be at the center of its attention. However, their principals do not assert leadership to enable the ILT to address the issues, and, teachers, as a group, do not pressure the principal to change the way in which the ILT functions. Most likely as a result of the weak status of the ILT in the school, teachers commented that it was difficult to insure adequate attendance at meetings.

> It was hard getting people to attend. It was the same people all the time. We never looked at student work, which is supposed to be [one of] the issues of the ILT. (Teacher C)

Non-member teachers in schools with Type 1 ILTs rarely had any idea about the focus of the ILT's work. This is not surprising since ILT members did not have formal responsibility for reporting to their teams or clusters and the ILTs did not make decisions that had schooltime implications.

In summary, schools with Type 1 ILTs are at a very early stage of implementation in light of the criteria that characterize well-functioning ILTs. Principals set meeting agendas with virtually no input from teachers and they lead the meetings. Teachers do not have meaningful roles in ILT decision making; rather, they are recipients for principals' ideas and information. There is little in-depth teacher talk, few links from one meeting to the next, and meetings rarely lead to action steps on the part of teachers.

Type 2 ILTs. Another small number of schools have ILTs that we characterize as Type 2. These ILTs are similarly led by administrators who set the ILT agenda, but members a) participate more fully in discussions, b) have a limited role in decision making, and c) are expected to report ILT decisions and discussions to their cluster/team colleagues and bring cluster/team issues to the ILT. Type 2 ILTs meet quite regularly and meetings focus on a) the Essentials, b) LASW, c) the alignment of curriculum with standards, d) implementation of literacy (and sometimes mathematics) programs, and e) implementation of the performance-based assessments. Teams evince growing attention to schooltime instructional issues and members participate in conversations about the benefits of having teachers take on significant leadership roles. Teachers who participate in these ILT meetings express greater satisfaction with the ILT and their role than do teachers on Type 1ILTs. However, they may also express considerable frustration at the limited extent to which non-ILT members take their work and their leadership seriously.

Type 2 ILTs functions at a higher level than do Type 1 ILTs. However, without considerable coach support and improved principal understanding of the role of the ILT and leadership of the reform, these ILTs could readily backslide into Type 1. We draw this conclusion based on data that reveal little, if any, growth in Type 2 ILTs during the past schoolyear. In addition, schools with this type of ILT tend to have at least a small group of teachers who a) do not want to engage in the work of reform and may invoke the teacher contract to sustain their position, and/or b) are antagonistic toward their principal. In some cases, principals reciprocate the antagonism, making for an unpleasant school climate among adults. ILT members' non-ILT colleagues, in other words, can make ILT members' work difficult by objecting to the policies and/or practices agreed to by the ILT.[22] On the other hand, with appropriate support, they have the potential to become the strong, instructionally focused teams envisioned by the reform.

> Composite Type 2 ILT. Type 2 ILTs tended to meet once or twice a month for between an hour and an hour and a half either before or after school. Some members continued to straggle in during the first 30 minutes of each meeting. The principal led most meetings; coach participation varied. Most grade-levels were represented on the ILT, but schools had members who either routinely did not attend or created conflict when in attendance. Teachers seemed to see themselves as the communication link between the ILT and their team/grade-level/cluster and, as such, they were concerned about getting sufficient information with which to answer their colleagues' questions about various policies. A few teachers expressed discomfort with what they saw as their role "telling other teachers what they should do." During meetings, the principal used a formal process to engage teachers in discussions. She might, for example, ask teachers to speak in turn about an issue that was on the agenda. The discussions that followed reflected the principal-developed agenda. The content of Type 2 ILT meetings often focused on instructional

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[22] Such teachers may also refuse to implement, for example, the literacy programs adopted by the schools. In many respects, they have not yet agreed to participate in the whole-school change agenda.

> issues. For example, one meeting focused on problems with the LASW protocol at use in the school. This had been an ongoing topic of discussion and the principal and coach had selected an alternative protocol that they assured teachers was "more effective and simpler." ILT members were to report this information back to their colleagues at team/cluster meetings. Another meeting focused on the challenges associated with aligning curriculum content with the standards in the absence of the district course guides. Other discussions focused on performance-based assessments. For example, two meetings were spent discussing the school's writing prompts and the work resulting from their implementation. Each team leader brought examples of, or spoke about work from her team. Another series of meetings focused on a) whether there should be a math prompt, and b) whether homework should be an extension of what was going on in class, or easier work that students could do on their own without parents' help. Finally, some ILT meetings focused on the role of ILT members and the difficulties they were having working with colleagues who a) did not like to have teachers in leadership positions, and/or b) did not want to participate in 90 minute LASW groups, for example.

Overall, members of Type 2 ILTs discussed interesting and important issues and developed some good ideas. They wrestled with important questions and were tolerant of disagreements. Teachers readily talked and ask questions regarding what had already been decided and how to implement those decisions. However, we observed no decisions and/or action plans made during any of our observations. The principal determined when each topic had been sufficiently discussed and moved on to the next agenda item. Meetings often ended with an administrator summarizing the information that had been discussed.

Type 2 ILT meetings are quite distinct from their Type 1 counterparts. Meetings occur regularly and focus on issues related to instruction and the school's particular instructional issues. They function as sessions in which teachers can learn about a) decisions that have already been made and how to implement them, and b) topics that the principal would like to discuss prior to making future decisions.[23] Type 2 ILT members a) engage seriously with the agenda items, b) consider them to be important, and c) accept their role as the link between their team/grade-level/cluster and the ILT. The high level of teacher engagement at meetings suggests that Type 2 ILTs could become a venue for making instructionally focused decisions. However, nothing we observed suggested that the meetings were being pushed in this direction by the principal, coach or teachers.

When asked about the major accomplishments of the ILT during the past schoolyear, teachers and principals in schools with Type 2 ILTs stressed the importance of communication.

> The ILT has accomplished a lot. It's a way of bringing together things – all the tremendous responsibilities that go on within the class, within the day of the school's life. It's just a way of coming together and understanding. There's an

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[23] Teachers on Type 2 ILTs sometimes report being involved in decision-making. When they do so, they are referring to their opportunity to vote on two options brought to them by the principal. We do not consider this the kind of decision-making that would characterize a high functioning ILT.

> agenda, and it's just the process of going through the agenda and understanding what's going on. And there's no question there's a connection to the day, there's no question there's a connection with what's going on. It's a really nice ILT, it's come together, and there are nice people, and it's really productive. (Teacher D)
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> We've met, we've discussed any types of problems within the school and brought back information to the clusters. [The agenda has] been a list of different things every time we meet. There are probably nine or ten things on the agenda to go through. Working with the students' behavior, because we [on the ILT] were able to discuss and get across what our expectations were of students and then, in turn, got it back to the clusters and tried to enforce it with the students. (Teacher E)
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> We've really talked about the writing prompt. We've talked about the math open-ended....We talked a lot about strategies of writing in the last two meetings. (Teacher F)
>
> I think that the ILT has driven the assessments, and I would say that's a major, major accomplishment. It supported the idea of doing the assessments, of having them three times, of wanting to look at them in depth. We spent a long time looking at MCAS in depth, to see how we could make the school better. It's a very slow process. I'd really like to rush it, but there isn't really any rushing. I would say that's the major role. (Teacher H)
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> I think it's nice to have teachers have a voice in the direction of the school and what priorities we have. It's good because we can go back and share what we discussed at the meetings with our grade level. And it's good, because if something is put on the table, we all have a chance to have some input as to whether or not we think it's a good, workable suggestion. We had a big discussion, actually, around the assessments. Some people thought we should give a different assessment every time, and some of us thought it wouldn't be valid, because if it's different, how would you see what growth has been made from the initial one? That was a very interesting discussion. We may go back and look at that again. (Teacher G)

Unlike their counterparts who work in schools with Type 1 ILTs, most non-ILT member teachers in our sample in these schools are familiar with the role of the ILT and its members. For the most part, they speak positively about their colleagues' ILT work. Their knowledge demonstrates that there is communication between ILT members and their teacher colleagues.

> I think the ILT definitely keeps us on task. The school has a mission and the fact that our cluster leaders are part of the ILT and they go to these regular meetings and they come back with information on what is expected, where do we go from here, everybody in the school is aware of what we're doing and what we're doing that's good, what we're doing that maybe we could do better. Our cluster leader,

> who's a member of the ILT, gets information on how we should be analyzing student work from the ILT meetings and she shares that with us in the cluster meetings and it just clarifies whether or not were using the right approach, whether or not we need to change our approach. I think the setup is wonderful; it's working. (Teacher I)

> A lot of assessment and curriculum issues are brought up at the ILT. [It's] looking more at the instructional part of the school, not the operations of the school. It seems, this year, to be much more focused. I'm not on the team, but I feel as though there's been a lot of changes, first of all, because for every grade-level there's somebody who's doing a lot of duties for the ILT... Our representative comes back and we know there's a chunk of our [grade-level] meeting she has to occupy because she has to report back to the ILT. Then she reports back to us and gets our input. (Teacher J)

> I am on the sub-committee, the assessment sub-committee, and I only attend the ILT when there's something that's germane to what I have done. I see the ILT as a disseminator of information that has been wonderful. It's a way for the administration to get quality feedback from teachers, to mutually set goals, and to have a shared decision-making process. And I think it has been very effective. It's a democratic way of doing things, and certainly very, very effective. And I think when someone is involved in the decision making process, the decision is better, because it's a shared and reached decision.[24] (Teacher K)

> What they do is they come back to our cluster meeting and they report to the cluster on whatever the ILT decides. (Teacher L)

> We have a memo of everything that's discussed [at the ILT]. So, we know what's going on there. I'm pretty happy with the representative. (Teacher M)

Nonetheless, even in these schools that have high functioning communications networks from their ILTs, some teachers claim to know nothing about the ILT's work. The first teacher comment suggests that this teacher is aware of being told about the performance-based assessments from the ILT minutes, but, perhaps, implies that she does not know what the ILT might be doing in regard to the assessments. The second teacher, is not negative about the team, but cannot identify any focus of its work.

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[24] Most teachers and all principals in our sample are clear that the ILT does not have formal decision-making authority. However, on some Type 2 ILTs when teachers feel they are influencing the decisions made by the principal they describe themselves as having a decision-making role. At the very least, they know that their views are taken seriously by their school's administrative team.

> I have no clue, no clue at all [about what the ILT has accomplished this year]. I do read the minutes. I read that what we're supposed to do is make sure that our assessments are driving our instruction. (Teacher N)

> I know [the ILT] is doing some good things here, but I can't put my hand, for the life of me, on anything specific. But I know that we've had some positive results. (Teacher I)

Teachers point out that, for a variety of reasons, communication is likely to remain a challenge for ILTs.

> It still is challenging to communicate with other teachers because people don't necessarily read everything if they get something in writing. So they think that they haven't been informed. The ILT has done a lot of work on that to try and really refine who people give information to. We've done a lot of work. But still you hear from people saying, "You know, I didn't know that." People don't always hear everything that you tell them. (Teacher H)

Comments from administrators of schools with Type 2 ILTs reveal that they, unlike their counterparts who lead schools with Type 1 ILTs, are knowledgeable about the work of their ILTs. Like the teachers, they stress the importance of the ILT's communication role and point to the team's important role in whole-school change.[25]

> What I'm grateful to the ILT for is improvement in communication and communication about instructional things, of course. It's much easier to get the information back to clusters through ILT members in such a big place. Particularly this year with all of the changes in the promotional policy and the assessment policy. That was very helpful because its so much easier to break a big place up into small groups....I would like to see [the ILT take] more now of an actual involvement in instruction. (Teacher O)

> I think the major accomplishment for the ILT [is its own development]. It's the same team; we've been together for [a while] and I think that's extremely valuable because the group is very cohesive, very collegial, it's very committed. And we've been able to be much more focused on our agendas and our agendas are much more aligned with what we needed to do and the path that we said that we would go through with our own adjustments in terms of the comprehensive

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[25] A few of the schools in our sample completed the In-Depth-Review (IDR) during the 1999-2000 schoolyear. The design and organization of the IDR process provided some of them with a structure and focus that strengthened the ILT and engaged a large number of teachers in the work of examining their whole-school change effort. In these schools, the IDR was influential in enabling principals and teachers to learn how to work together on a focused, instructionally oriented project. On the other hand, the IDR in other schools consumed so much time and attention that the ILT did little more than attend to its requirements.

> school plan. We also have improved the communication. It's still a challenge and I think it'll always be a challenge in a building as large as this. [But it's] better in a number of ways. (Administrator C)
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> I'm [just] an ILT member, and I like that. Sometimes I have more information than other people and I do get to influence decisions a little bit more than other people. We do have some people there who speak their mind. And the funny thing is even the quiet ones do speak their mind. And they're very active, and I like it that way. They really act as a, I don't want to say the decision making body because that's not what they are by law, but they're very much an advisory board to me. They help me shape the way the school is going. Which, I think, is the idea of having an ILT. (Administrator D)

Coaches who work in schools that have Type 2 ILTs note that the teams do have the potential to move into a higher level of functioning. They talk about their hopes for "next steps" for these ILTs, but recognize that moving forward will be difficult for the same reasons raised by teachers.

> [We are] in the process of attempting to have the ILT have more of a leadership role in the school. For example, instead of the principal doing all the presentations [at after-school meetings], we have supported ILT members to present in front of the whole school [in order to] really enhance and validate their role as school leaders. Which is really critical in terms of the involvements of the ILT I think it's been more empowering. I think administration knows that's what we want to do with the ILT. I think we're helping them clarify how those things happen. (Teacher P)
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> The conversations are often issue oriented and that core group of people has a very good working knowledge of what's happening at the school. They don't set the agenda. And I wish that could be the next step, that they would get more involved in setting the agenda and leading the meetings. I think that would definitely be something that would strengthen the ILT. I think they should be asked if they'd like to put anything on the agenda and be taken seriously about that at this point. They function well, though. The [problematic] issue has been their communication with their colleagues. Because they're supposed to be representing a group and then going back and getting feedback from them and bringing them up to date on everything. That piece doesn't happen very well. And especially if it's a sensitive issue. [ILT members] do not want to get into those difficult conversations. (Coach A)

Coaches' comments reveal that they are aware of the status of ILT development in these schools. They recognize the teams' strengths and weaknesses and are clear about what they would like to see as next steps. They are not always sanguine, however, about the prospects of principals and teachers being able to take those steps.

In summary, Type 2 ILTs meet regularly, focus on instructionally related topics that are connected to the Essentials, and have consistent strategies for connecting their colleagues with the focus of the ILT. Still, teachers on these ILTs have little, if any, input into the ILT agenda and discussions focus on clarifying decisions made by administrators and/or coaches. In some schools, ILT members face difficulty interacting with colleagues who do not support their work or the whole-school change agenda. This makes the ILT member's role frustrating, at times. Furthermore, in some schools with Type 2 ILTs there are teachers and principals who are antagonistic to each other. This does not bode well for forwarding the schools' instructional agendas or sustaining and nurturing the work of teachers who serve on the ILTs. It is not encouraging for the development of a collegial, collaborative culture focused on instruction. Nonetheless, as we wrote earlier, these ILTs have implemented the organization and focus of the ILT. With sufficient and appropriate external support, perhaps from coaches, they may be able to move to a much higher level of functioning that would place them in the category we call Type 3.

Type 3ILTs. Type 3 ILTs represent the broadest range of ILT functioning in our sample. Some of these schools, although they understand the whole-school change model, appear to approach its requirements in a compliance mode: they worry about "looking good" when external visits occur. This orientation gets in the way of deeper discussions about teaching and learning. Others have contexts in which ILT members and other teacher leaders are seen by non-ILT members as part of an elite club that is directed and controlled by the principal. As a result, ILT decisions are sometimes challenged on the extent to which they represent the views of the school. Even when non-ILT members agree with the ILT, they argue that the group is flawed because of who is on it and what they see as the dominance of the administrative team. Nonetheless, Type 3 ILTs are distinguishable from Type 2 ILTs by a number of factors: 1) teachers have more fully developed leadership roles on the ILT and with their colleagues, 2) ILT agendas are linked to one another and often have a clear, instructional focus that is tied to the school's SMART goals, 3) ILT decisions have consequences for others in the school, and 4) ILT members are expected to assert leadership in implementing ILT decisions. Type 3 ILTs function as leadership teams for whole-school, instructionally focused reform. For the most part, although administrators and coaches still set the agendas, teachers contribute to them in meaningful ways. Most meetings are facilitated by the principal and/or the coach, but in some schools, teachers facilitate all of the meetings and have other formal roles such as timekeeper. Type 3 ILT members have a deeper understanding of the reform components and discussions about instruction, therefore, are more complex than those in schools with Type 1 ILTs. Nonetheless, they are not as detailed and complex as those noted in schools with Type 4 ILTs (described in the next section).

> Composite Type 3 ILT. Type 3 meetings took place for approximately one and one half to two hours. Most members arrived on time. The coach always started the meetings and distributed the agenda, but the various agenda items were owned by different ILT members including teachers and administrators. In addition, the role of ILT members was made clear at the beginning of the schoolyear: to be a representative for your team or constituency as well as to "wear your whole school hat." The primary goal for the ILT was identified as "using data to improve instruction." Meetings focused on the logistics

of the measuring student progress work – for example, what tests would be administered when– and how LASW would be linked to the assessments. Agendas were often set at the end of one meeting for the next; this contributed to a strong sense of coherence and to follow-up of important issues. The coach also gave ILT members opportunities to add new items to the agenda at the beginning of meetings.

ILT members varied in the extent of their contributions to the meeting discussions with several taking an especially active role that involved bringing issues to the meetings for discussion or volunteering to facilitate whole school LASW sessions, and a few others rarely speaking. When present, the parent liaison, was also a strong participant in the discussions who often pushed teachers to think of ways to improve communication with parents. Meetings we observed included discussions about what the ILT needed to do to determine a) progress toward SMART goals, b) appropriate reading benchmarks for each grade level, c) the purpose of the performance-based assessments including issues related to administering and interpreting performance-based assessment results, c) an upcoming BPE visit, d) how to complete the SAS, and e) how to get feedback from the other teachers on a number of important topics.

The ILT also spent considerable time planning the LASW sessions. ILT members played a large role in facilitating LASW sessions as well as facilitating their smaller team meetings. The coach presented the agenda and facilitated all the meetings. The principal, who was sometimes delayed due to other pressing issues, made valuable contributions to the conversation as a participant, not as its leader. For example, during the planning discussion for an upcoming LASW session the principal asked, "Will the session focus on making a rubric or on answering what the work shows the teachers that the kid needs to know better?" Teachers would make the final decisions about the focus of the LASW session, but both the principal and the coach asked important guiding questions to ensure that the final plan was well thought out and appropriate.

Most ILT meeting time was spent in free flowing conversation as teachers brought up different concerns and ideas (usually related to instruction). These conversations were often about their own practice, but they would sometimes make comments about how to help other teachers question their own practice in a similar manner. For example, at one meeting, a member shared a strategy for teaching reading comprehension and the group then discussed how to help other teachers realize the value of such an approach. These kinds of conversations – sharing of best practices – usually occurred when the group was discussing the LASW sessions that they were responsible for planning and facilitating. Their positive experiences of discussing instruction as an ILT strengthened their appreciation of the importance of LASW.

The coach participated in these conversations but also interrupted occasionally to a) get the group back to the agenda topics, b) keep conversations moving towards a decision, c) get the teachers to self-monitor their conversations and take more responsibility for keeping to the agenda, and d) keep conversations focused on the bigger picture of whole-school change. Teachers did not mind the coach directing them in this way. However, the coach appeared torn between pushing the agenda items and allowing the teachers to take responsibility for the content of the meetings. At a spring meeting, an ILT member spontaneously started taking notes to help organize the discussion. Her role was effective in keeping the group on task. The coach then acted as a resource for clarifying issues

> rather than the primary facilitator of the meeting. This assumption of teacher leadership indicated a potential capacity for the ILT to function without a coach in the future.

Members of Type 3 ILTs are usually satisfied with their work and conclude that the teams have made progress during the 1999-2000 schoolyear. Their comments point to the fact that ILT members take on leadership of schooltime work that focuses on improving instruction.

> What do I think the ILT has accomplished? We straightened away our assessment. As an ILT, we all have a common understanding of what it is and what it's used for and how we can help the other teachers with it. We've set benchmarks for all of the kids, and we've been able to communicate those to the teachers. Looking at student work, we've been planning that and facilitating the sessions, which have been pretty productive. We haven't really started setting our goals for next year and figuring out what we've accomplished this year. I think as a whole school we've really accomplished a lot of things this year, for example, taking on this assessment and doing it, and getting into running records, and [working on] our parent participation. The staff has come along a lot this year. (Teacher Q)

> We've done a lot of work connected to using data to display what we have done with the looking at student work and that kind of thing, with trying to put it in places where it's accessible to teachers, and sort of fine-tuning how we're doing data display in the school. ... We've also been addressing issues as they relate to MCAS. We looked at the tests of the kids from the previous years and their responses and just exactly how they did, and tried to figure out from their responses, what the kids are trying to think of [when they answer]. Oftentimes, we saw the kids had given the most direct answer rather than the most thoughtful answer. Then we talked about how to get kids to be more critical thinkers and that kind of thing. (Teacher R)

> I think one of the major accomplishments is the way ILT members facilitated the whole school change process meetings, where we looked at the work and we looked at the prompts. It seemed to flow very smoothly. You had different members facilitating at different levels. You had bilingual and monolingual teachers working together, all the kindergarten teachers in one room, generally talking about what they needed to do. Then we separated because teachers were going to read in Spanish and read in English. And I thought having that facilitated by staff members was a big accomplishment. They were mostly ILT members or members of an ILT sub-committee. And also we looked at our plan for assessment. I would say a lot of ILT time was spent on assessment. I think we finally have our final [way of recording] progress that we're going to use. We hope to get that out to teachers next week. (Teacher U)

Principals' perspectives on their ILTs confirm the views of their teachers as well as our observations.

> The ILT has been able to actually connect the teachers' questions, the teachers' best strategies, the teachers' concerns, to keep moving on what we have started. Call it change. Teachers bring the hard questions. And they are hard on themselves. They said, "I don't see so and so doing it [meaning implementing the literacy strategies.]" And I have actually said, "We don't name people. [I know] there are a few people who are not doing it. OK, how can we then help them?" So the ILT has become a resource group for everybody else. One of the major accomplishments is that I don't run the meetings anymore, they do. Not only the ILT meetings but also what is going to happen next, what should be happening at the grade-level meetings. What should be happening in the after school looking at student work sessions. They are the ones who said, "OK, I hear teachers saying this. The majority feels this way. What are we going to do about it?" They are the ones who plan. [They say, "We should do this so we can address [teachers' concerns]." And it's funny because some people are light years ahead of others. I think that they could be able to run a school as educational leaders soon. That's how good they are. (Administrator E)

> I think this was the most fruitful year with the ILT. I've really a wonderful feeling about it...because the ILT became the process, our self monitoring group, our process, our communicator. It became the capacity for our school, the voice for the school. It really was where everybody wanted to be and we felt really good about the process and the way it was. (Administrator F)

> I feel better about the ILT this year, myself. I'm trying to think– why do I feel that way? Maybe more people consistently coming to the meetings. I was very proud of the way the members were informing their colleagues about assessment. I think that's the role. I really feel the role of the ILT is to know about all the assessments and to review curriculum. They review writing prompts, they looked at data, they heard about assessment. I see it as a giant professional development effort. I was really happy with [the ILT] this year. (Administrator G)

Our data support ILT members' views of what these teams have accomplished this past school year. And, we have evidence that non-ILT members recognize how ILT leadership supports their whole-school improvement efforts.

> The ILT has made decisions, but nothing earth shattering. It's used as a forum for us to try and keep our vision and move our vision forward. They took our focus and narrowed it down, so in our staff meetings, in our curricula meetings and things, we were focusing only on the literacy piece [and one other area]. Whereas before, the meetings were [about] all different things. There was no rhyme or reason to what we were being shown. So they did sort of focus it down so that

> we're focusing on these two things and that's all we're working on. And I think that was a good decision, and that worked well. (Teacher T)
>
> We all worked on the goals for the school and what we wanted to achieve. And I think that they really kept us all on track as to were we making the progress that we wanted to make and were we really keeping the goals the entire school faculty have formed in mind? And how were these equating with the citywide, the systemwide, curriculum goals that they wanted us to accomplish? We would many times discuss this when we would have our in-service meetings.... I just think it kept us all, like a grid, focused on where we were, reminding us of the goals that we had set, and helping us keep aligned towards how we were going to achieve those goals. (Teacher S)

But the data also reveal that, as with schools that have Type 2 ILTs, a substantial number of non-ILT members do not share members' enthusiasm. They a) do not think that the ILT represents their views, b) dislike what they see as its somewhat "elite" status, and c) consider it to be a tool of the administration. These teachers' view of the role and functioning of the team remains the same even when they agree with the outcomes of much of its work.

> Sometimes, it boils down to a little group doing a particular thing, and I don't really think it's a reflection of the whole school. I think that when we talk about instructional leadership teams, we need to set them up in ways that are conducive to everyone. I really think that a lot of times those types of teams are stacked with people that are really novices in the school system, and they bring lots of skill, they bring a tremendous amount of energy, and their heart is usually in the right place. However, those type of people are also easily motivated to make decisions in a particular way, when administration or the system asks them to. Where someone who's been around for 25+ years might take a little stronger stand in questioning what they're asked to do. That's my commentary on all of those committees. I have found that a lot of times administrators don't want people who have been around a long time, who are really knowledgeable, because that can put a real kink [in what the administration wants to do]. (Teacher V)

Other teachers pointed out that their ILTs did not represent them because they included, for example, no Latino members. This situation, again, was attributed to the role of administrators in selecting ILT members.

Finally, some ILT members and non-members support the ILT's work, but also recognize the concerns raised by their colleagues.

> They [ILT members] direct the staff meetings, they make up an agenda and try to keep us focused on what they think are issues that we want to talk about. [But] I hear more and more people saying, "I'm so sick of the ILT group telling us what we're supposed to be doing." [In response] there are other people who say, "Well,

> if you don't like it, then be a member and decide what to talk about. Otherwise just do what you're supposed to do." But people are getting a little tired of that. And I think the people that are on it are getting tired of doing it. I guess maybe they [also] think some people have certain agendas and that's always what we talk about. And [at] some [whole-school] meetings we go and we'll start a discussion and we'll get to this point, and a lot of people really want to talk about this point and solve this problem. [We are told] we'll put that on the agenda for next time, right now, this is what is on the agenda, and we want to talk about it now. And so, you know, it's like when the kids ask you how to spell a word, that's when to tell them, because they want to know, and they'll remember it. And they don't do it for us. We want to discuss this now! But they [the administrative leadership and coach] don't. So that's been a problem this year. But everyone's trying to do their best. (Teacher W)
>
> I was feeling positive. As the year went on, there was a lot of sharing at the meeting, a lot of different people providing information, looking at the new promotion policy and giving input into that. I don't really feel as if we changed anything; I'm not even sure what would need to be changed. It still tends to be administrative-led, rather than teacher-led or whole group-led. I think this year it's a little bit better than it has been in the past, as far as [teachers having input into] agendas. [The coach] has been very good; she's not afraid to say what she thinks, and she's initiated a lot of things that we've done. I think it will be difficult [to continue the ILT without a coach]. A lot of people refused to be on it this year. They said, "No, I am not doing this -- people who had been [members before]. They said, "Nothing changes. It's not effective, I don't want to give up my time for that." And other people, like me, who are ever optimistic, think that things will come together, things will change. I'm not real sure, myself, whether things will ever get to the point [we want]. I don't think we have a good model of what a functioning ILT really does. I don't think we've ever seen one in action, or even heard about one. (Teacher X)

These teachers raise important points about the role of Type 3 ILTs as they approach high-functioning status. At this level, these teams intentionally seek to have an impact on the school as a whole. They represent the leadership for whole-school change, the cutting edge of the evolution in roles from teachers exercising autonomy and acting in isolation to teachers acting as a set of colleagues who are collectively responsible professionals. Because of the evolving role of the Type 3 ILT teachers in these schools want to know the answers to a range of significant questions: Is the ILT a body that, in effect, can tell us what to do in light of the school's instructional focus and SMART goals? What stance can non-ILT member teachers legitimately take toward its decisions? Can teachers, in other words, refuse to cooperate? These questions go to the heart of the whole-school change reform strategy of engaging teachers in collaborative, collegial work focused on instruction. They raise questions about the extent to which and ways in which teachers will accept one another as leaders of reform (an issue we discuss in Section III). They raise questions about the roles that principals must take as their schools come closer to developing the instructionally focused culture that the reform hopes to establish. One teacher in our sample echoes others when she notes some of the conditions that must be in place if ILTs are to be fully effective. Importantly, she points out that even members of a Type 3 ILT can demonstrate different levels of commitment, perhaps ambivalence to its work.

> I really feel that it should be a group of teachers and administrators who are making decisions about academic programs that work for the whole school. And in order for that to happen, everybody has to buy into it. If everybody's not buying into it, I don't see how it can function. Even the teachers who are not part of the ILT have to buy into that. And that really doesn't happen. I mean, some people do all the talking, and some people are at the ILT meetings and never say a word. So, whether they have ideas that they want to contribute but just don't feel comfortable saying them, in view of who's there. I don't know, I mean, that might be the case, I don't know. (Teacher X)

Coaches point out that principal leadership is essential for expanding and legitimatizing the role of the ILT and ensuring that virtually all teachers understand that the work of whole-school change is everyone's work. The following coach comment speaks to the importance of a) bringing these kinds of issues to the ILT, and b) the principal's role in supporting the ILT's decisions and making it clear to all others that the work adopted by the ILT is the school's work.

> I think that [teachers not implementing the program] is a legitimate issue for the ILT's to discuss. I think the way the [school] has dealt with it in the past is to push faculty-wide decisions to adopt things. There were people that were not in favor and were resistant about that. But, in the end, the ILT made it become a schooltime decision. Then it's up to the principal. That's where the principal has to step in and both support the ILT's role in making those decisions, and then follow up with staff who say, "I'm not going to do this." I mean, nobody dared say to [the principal], "I'm not going to do this." They expressed their concerns, but nobody ever flat out said I'm not going to do this – the way I know happens in other schools. [The principal would] just tell them, "Well, get out the transfer list." (Coach C)

Without principals taking on the responsibility of requiring all teachers to engage in the reform, it will be impossible for schools to move beyond the point of having a cadre of teachers who, in theory, could knowledgeably lead reform but lack sufficient collegial support to do so in practice.

In concluding our discussion of Type 3 ILTs, we want to raise another issue that will need to be addressed if schools are to further advance in the work of whole-school change. As we noted at the outset of the discussion of Type 3 ILTs, a small number of these schools appear to be more attentive to issues of external accountability – to the way they will be perceived by the BPE-BAC or BPS – during site visits than they are to building the school's internal capacity to move forward with reform.[26] For example, a conversation about how to display performance-based assessment data was oriented towards what the BPS Deputy Superintendents look for when they do walk-throughs and what the BPE-BAC looks for when it makes its site visits rather than toward what the implications of the data were for the school. During another discussion with a similar focus, one teacher eventually said: "I think we're going down the wrong path here. We're talking about volunteering people [to put up work] who are good at this kind of thing when this [discussion] should really be about involving the whole staff in making authentic work public." Although an administrator acknowledged the teacher's point, as did the coach, the conversation remained focused on what "others" would be looking for during their visits. At the end of the meeting, the coach talked about the importance of helping everyone know how to identify authentic work and said she would get this kind of information to teachers. But, in the end, the ILT's work focused on what the group had to do so that the school could "look good."[27]

We do not deny the importance of attending to external accountability. However, our point is that such Type 3 ILTs also need to direct their attention to internal accountability issues if they are to engage all of their teachers in the work of reform and ensure that all of them share the conceptual understanding of the reform's components. It is, in a sense, easier to focus on the external visits than it is to focus on how to engage all teachers in participating in whole-school change. Such a shift in focus will not happen without clear and effective principal leadership.

In summary, Type 3 ILTs are close to functioning in the ways deemed desirable by the BPE-BAC. They meet regularly to discuss work that is linked to the school's instructional focus and SMART goals, and teachers have leadership roles on the ILT and with their non-ILT member colleagues. Although principals and coaches still set the ILT agendas, teachers have ample opportunity to add items to those agendas. ILT members have a much more developed understanding of the Essentials and their importance to whole-school change than do their colleagues on Type 1 and 2 ILTs. However, this knowledge does not usually extend to many other teachers in their schools. Therefore, Type 3 ILTs face the challenge of increasing all teachers knowledge and skill with respect to the reform agenda and the particular role of the ILT. Type 3 ILTs have the authority to make decisions intended to have an impact on the entire school. When they do not make such decisions, however, principals vary in the extent to which they assert leadership to ensure full implementation. The leadership teams in these schools will need support to develop a strategy for engaging all teachers in the work of reform. If they can do this, with a combination of coach and principal leadership, they have the potential to move to the next higher level of functioning.

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[26] In making this claim, we want to remind the readers that we are speaking of schools with ILTs that have made a great deal of progress in order to become Type 3. We point out the orientation to external accountability because, if such schools are to advance in their work, they will need to develop a somewhat more expansive view of accountability.

[27] Teachers and principals who are externally oriented in this way are also serious about implementing their schools' instructional focus and making other changes likely to improve teaching and learning. They understand why they are making the changes and value what they are learning to do. They are not implementing new teaching strategies, in other words, just to comply. However, compliance is more important to them than it appears to be to other schools with Type 3 ILTs.

Type 4 ILTs. These ILTs bear a significant resemblance to Type 3 ILTs. They, too, function as leadership teams for whole-school, instructionally focused reform in which: 1) teachers have more fully developed leadership roles on the ILT and with their colleagues, 2) ILT agendas are linked to one another and often have a clear, instructional focus that is tied to the school's SMART goals, 3) ILT decisions have consequences for others in the school, and 4) ILT members are expected to assert leadership in implementing ILT decisions. For the most part, although administrators and coaches still set the agendas and facilitate most meetings, teachers contribute to the agendas and lead, at least, parts of some meetings. What distinguishes Type 4 ILTs from their Type 3 counterparts, however, is that a) these schools have a greater proportion of their non-ILT member teachers engaged with the work of whole-school change, b) their knowledge of the issues of improving instruction is deeper and more complex, and, as a result c) their ILT discussions more often focus on cross-grade issues and address difficult questions of teaching and learning. If we were using the categories on the Phases Chart to make our distinctions, we would place schools with Type 4 ILTs in the category called "Continuous Progress." These ILTs are working well, but their members believe that they still need to improve.

Schools with Type 4 ILTs may well have the in-house capacity to sustain their ILT work without a coach because someone already in the school – a principal, assistant principal or director of instruction – can take on that role. The formal leaders in these schools seem able to guide their teachers to make informed instructional decisions by providing clear parameters to discussions and keeping ILT members focused on how to better implement the Essentials. Nonetheless, even in schools with Type 4 ILTs, our observations reveal that coaches add to the conversations by asking good questions that can take the ILT to a better level of functioning.

> Composite Type 4 ILT. Type 4 ILTs usually meet every two weeks for between one hour and fifteen minutes and one hour and a half. Meetings at the start of the year established goals for the 1999-2000 schoolyear that resulted from the SAS process concluded at the end of the previous school year. Early meetings also clarified that "the role and responsibility of the ILT was to make sure that the goals established in the SAS were met in the current school year." Teacher members of the ILT were clear that their role was to relate information back and forth between their team and the ILT. Agendas were generally oriented around the Essentials and addressed LASW, SMART goals, resource allocation, and professional development. The specifics of the agendas tended to get developed at the end of one meeting in preparation for the subsequent one. (They were finalized and amended by the coach and/or the administrators.) There was always time set aside in the agenda for teachers to raise new issues.
>
> Members sometimes volunteered to be time-keeper and note-taker. Typically, the coach or an administrator started off the meeting but they did not dominate and meetings were organized to maximize teacher participation. For example, at one meeting the principal acted as notetaker while the teachers expressed their opinions about how the fall assessments had gone. She used the notes to develop a set of recommendations for the

> winter administrations. At several meetings, the principal said that she had ideas about how something should be done, but that she wanted the teachers' input as well. In these cases, teachers' opinions often formed the basis of the final decision.
>
> While ILT meetings were oriented towards the school's goals with respect to the whole-school change Essentials, members did not approach these topics in a compliance mode. For example, a meeting that focused on supporting LASW involved ILT members in looking at work from all of the grade levels and discussing how to consistently use the school-developed rubric. The coach led this particular discussion and indicated that the ILT discussion was to ensure continuity in the ways that grade-level teams used the rubrics. It also served a second purpose. The conversations created important opportunities for teachers to review the concept of standards and common expectations for all students as well as the purpose of LASW. It helped them develop the knowledge and skills that would allow them, in some cases, to play leadership roles in support of LASW on their grade level teams, and in other cases merely to understand *why* they were spending their time collectively looking at student work against a schooltime rubric. This latter effect of the conversation was especially important for newer teachers who did not have a sense of the bigger picture of the reform work.
>
> In other productive conversations, the ILT talked about re-allocating resources in order to provide more support for students who were not on track to meet end-of-year benchmarks. Involving the ILT in this discussion further established the value of the schooltime performance-based assessment work; enabling teachers to discuss alternative ideas created buy-in regarding the re-allocation of resources. Some ILT meetings were less productive than these. For example, a discussion of how to promote teacher leadership in the school did not lead to any action steps. Another discussion was unproductive due to a mis-communication that did not get clarified. However, overall, there was a sense of purpose to these ILT meetings: teachers and administrators were working together to improve the school's instructional program.

ILT members from schools with Type 4 ILTs talk readily about their work and how they are developing their knowledge and skill about what it entails. Their comments reveal a perspective informed by hard work over a number of years.

> The ILT has taken more of a leadership role in the school. It's taken this focus that we've always had and has been able to move others forward because of the leadership role that we've taken. The focus [on literacy] has been there. But, what the ILT has done is taken more of a leadership role to move everyone forward. When we first started as an ILT, we were kind of floundering. We didn't know where we were going. You know, we'd never done this before. I don't think we really had a clear understanding of what was expected of us. But now I think we have a clear understanding of what's expected of us, as far as being the leaders in moving our literacy program forward. We're now at a point where we're more confident of what we're doing and we have a clear understanding of what is expected of us. Because of that, we're stronger and because we're stronger we're able to take more of a leadership role and take that focus that we have and carry [it forward]. (Teacher Y)

This teacher points to the ILT's growing understanding of its role which led to greater effectiveness in its work. The next teacher highlights a related aspect of the ILT's growth that is based on members' ability to stay focused long enough to learn about the impact of their decisions. Her comments also reveal that ILT members are increasingly aware of the importance of having good data from which to make further decisions.

> I think we've really honed down and really focused on what we need as a school. We're really looking at whole school change and thinking about how we're going to do that. And so, I think every year we get one thing and we really, really improve upon that. Our school culture [in the past] was very different. We'd try something and try the next week to figure out what happened! Did it work or did it not work? I feel that over this whole year we sort of stuck to our guns. We said, "We're going to try this [for the year]; let's see what happens. And we've stuck to it. And in the past we would start out and [things would] sort of fall by the wayside. This year we really looked at the whole year and I think by next week we'll be able to see what really happened with us. (Teacher Z)

Members of Type 4 ILTs talked readily about the range of issues discussed at their meetings. Their comments revealed the schooltime focus of their work as well as the coherence of it. The following ILT member pointed out how the theme of assessment has been consistent throughout the school this past year.

> We have been focusing on different areas of instruction and assessment. I think that probably during the first meetings, we had been discussing more about what things we can be doing, and that has been very positive. I think that change takes a lot of time. We all have so many things we're doing at the same time and different responsibilities. But I find that we have had opportunities to discuss some things that we started [a while ago]. And the ILT has been taking them and we continue to work on those things. Assessment is one area of consistency all along the school – in terms of expectations and areas of student development. For example, when we developed the writing rubric, I think it's very clear that each group or each grade level is really working in the same areas, but adapting the rubric to the specific possibilities of each grade level. That was very good too, to really look at [all of] the consistencies throughout the school on certain areas. We are beginning to do that in math. (Teacher DD)

Teachers also spoke about the ILT having a role in making aspects of instructional change more meaningful for teachers. The first ILT member noted that the ILT had begun to take on the role of interpreting and adapting district and BPE-BAC initiatives so that they made sense at the school. To this end, she noted that the ILT had been trying to make the performance-based assessment piece relevant to teachers' needs.

> We've struggled with how to improve the performance-based assessment process and ways to support teachers to make their use more sensible. (Teacher AA)

This next Type 4 ILT member also pointed to the fact that they were trying to do things that a) focus on instruction, and b) will be helpful to teachers as they try to implement the next phases of reform.

> I think we [on the ILT] managed to look a lot at math, ...And in math, in particular, we started looking at the vocabulary and sort of creating lists for people. We started to look at things we could do that were more helpful for teachers in the classroom. I thought that was really a positive thing. (Teacher BB)

Finally, teachers pointed to the increasing success of communication strategies as evidence of improved ILT functioning. The next comment, from a teacher who had been on the ILT in the past, revealed her new-found awareness of how difficult it is for non-ILT member teachers to become informed about the ILT's work and knowledge of the current ILT's efforts to improve communications.

> Last year I was on the ILT. Or maybe the year before. And I just thought everybody knew what we were doing because I knew what we were doing. And now that I'm not on the ILT, I don't know what they're doing. I really don't. But they just recently established a system where every member of the ILT has particular people that they are responsible for personally – for getting information to those particular staff members about what they are doing. And what I know is that each ILT member is responsible for certain things. And that [information] trickles down to the whole body through the team meetings. (Teacher CC)

And others pointed out the importance of the reciprocal aspect of the ILT's role. As the next teacher observed, Type 4 ILT members represented their colleagues in an interactive fashion.

> I'm seeing the ILT as a two-way street, where the representatives of the teachers, administration, the parents [are] on the ILT where decisions are being made or discussed, [where] things that are happening at the school are being discussed in the group that represents the different constituencies. And, at the same time, those representatives going back to their groups, to discuss those things, and bring more feedback into the ILT. (Teacher DD)

Interestingly, principals and coaches, while identifying the strengths of the ILTs, also identify areas where they need to improve their operations. They, like teachers, see themselves as participating in an enterprise that needs to get better. And, they attempt to ascertain strategies that will address the agreed-upon needs. The first principal speaks about improving communications; the second identifies the different stages of "readiness" for reform among her teachers as an area for further attention.

> We looked at the SAS again and, one of the things that we had not done last year which was to kind of assign tasks to our members to get things done. I felt that was important, that we make sure our communication would improve. That was part of what was lacking in previous years; there was not really good communication between the ILT members and their [teams] and vice versa. (Administrator H)

> And I think [we need to acknowledge that] some of us are way ahead of others. And the ILT seems to be that group of people who are ready to run on something. And sometimes I have to say to them, "You've got two or three people here who are not even crawling yet. So, how do we not leave them out and how do we bring them along." And sometimes it's a disadvantage [having the ILT], because people get frustrated. "I'm ready to go. Let's pick the month and we're all going to do TERC geometry." And I've got people whose books are still sitting here [in my office]. And they [the ILT members] don't know that. (Administrator I)

Principals of schools with Type 4 ILTs need to learn how to share their leadership issues with teachers who are now in meaningful leadership positions themselves. It is not always obvious to principals how or how much to share. This is new terrain for most of them. It is for this reason, in particular, that we think coaches can play an important role in nurturing and improving the work of Type 4 ILTs.

Coaches recognize the progress these ILTs have made and describe their operations in terms that come close to meeting the criteria detailed on page six.

> Well, the way the ILT is operating at [that] school comes closest to my vision of what it would look like [in theory]. And that's where the teachers initiate topics, work together on curriculum direction, policy with parents, or they know the six essentials of reform and are talking about things that would help in that school. The ILT definitely feels like a teacher leadership team, a leadership team that sees broad issues. Members collaborate among themselves and with the principal. (Coach A)

> There are so many leaders in this building, and the very important point is that the ILT members really take it upon themselves to really share information with the other members of their teams. They go, they make extra meetings, or sometimes the study group would take five minutes [to go over the ILT notes]. But they bring the information back [to their groups] and they synthesize it. We were talking about math vocabulary and strategy, and one teacher went and polled all the people on her team: "What kind of strategies are you using?" "Could you give samples?" And she got [from that] a packet of work samples and strategies and typed it all up and then we have it, we're compiling this [for other teachers]. So that it's like ILT members saying [to their colleagues], "Well this is what we're doing in ILT and these are the things we're talking about," and getting that

> to the teachers and it's so much more powerful than a memo coming from the office that says you need to be thinking about this. ...So I think that piece, having a group of people who's keeping their eye on their goal, and then bringing that back to their teams, [the ILT] serves a great purpose. When I have to envision what an ILT is, I think of this group of people who are sort of the leaders of the reform initiative and everyone in this building, in some way, is doing that. Some more than others, some in very different ways. But just because someone's on the ILT, that doesn't necessarily mean [they are the only ones doing this work], you know there are people who are not on the ILT who do a lot. We look at leadership in so many different ways here. (Coach D)

Finally, members of Type 4 ILTs are beginning to think about the possibility of having the ILT take on more difficult issues, for example, serious issues of resource allocation. Teacher leaders in schools with Type 4 ILTs (and some in schools with Type 3 ILTs) point to the increasing complexity of the work in which they are engaged and their need for more time to meet and to work as peer coaches, for example. Perhaps, suggest such teachers, the ILT is now well-positioned to consider these resource allocation issues that are central to the further development of whole-school, instructionally focused change.

> The ILT has a responsibility to look at instruction, a responsibility to share leadership, and I wonder about the limitations of that or its ability to do that. Because people still need help coordinating the programs that we're involved in. ... Maybe the instructional leadership team could find a good solution to that. I really think we need to – if we're an instructional leadership team – look at what are the things we have available in our school? How are people struggling and trying to mesh all of these things, given that we have new staff? How do we provide support for them? What can we do? And then look at issues that were brought up at our last meeting, such as shared leadership, and budgeting and all of those things that are such an integral part of the school. ... I'd like to broaden [the focus of the ILT] a little more. I think we're doing well. I'm not dissatisfied. But I'd like to push that envelope, so that we could do a little more. (Teacher BB)

In summary, Type 4 ILTs come close to functioning according to the criteria suggested by the BPE-BAC. Teachers exercise leadership roles and principals participate as members of the ILT and as instructional leaders. ILT discussions focus on instructional issues, on the SMART goals associated with the schools' SAS documents and on other instructional issues that may arise. There is significant schooltime follow-up to ILT decisions and significant non-ILT member actions that influence the work of the ILT. Increasingly, ILT members are bringing difficult issues to the team in an effort to improve their schools' capacity to improve teaching and learning. Not all meetings exhibit all of these attributes and not every teacher has fully bought-in to the whole-school change effort. There are outliers even in these schools. However, on the whole, ILT meetings accomplish important goals and many teachers in these schools serve as leaders who support their colleagues in implementing the instructional focus and associated activities chosen by the ILTs.

Summary and Conclusions, Part A: ILTs.

- ***Schools vary significantly in the quality of their ILTs.*** A number of schools, those we call Type 1 and Type 2, approximately half of our sample, do not have well-functioning ILTs. However, the other half of our sample schools, those whose ILTs we call Type 3 and Type 4, have ILTs that function well and serve an important leadership role in their schools.

- ***Several common factors seem to account for the high and low functioning ILTs.*** These common factors include a) the quality of principal leadership which is related to the principal's understanding of the conceptual underpinnings of the reform and the links among the Essentials, and the principal's capacity and willingness to work in the collaborative ways envisioned by the reform; b) the social context of the school –the willingness of teachers to work with one another as well as the willingness of a cadre of teachers to take on the initial leadership work; c) the interaction of the principal's leadership and the school's social context and their impact on the potential of the ILT to work as an instructionally focused leadership team.

- ***The Type of ILT has a significant impact on the school's capacity to engage in whole-school change.*** Without a well-functioning ILT, there is no organizational structure in schools that can focus and lead the reform effort. School-site councils (SSCs) do not focus on instruction; they do not represent the teachers by including a representative from each grade-level, cluster or team; they may not develop mechanisms through which to provide colleagues with feedback which, in turn, informs the SSC about teachers' interests and concerns. Without a well-functioning ILT, the whole-school change agenda can be reduced to a set of literacy (and mathematics) programs which do not enable the schools to create the collaborative, collegial culture that will result in ongoing conversations about instruction and professional development targeted to teachers' needs.

- ***A few schools have non-ILT member teachers who question the extent to which the ILT represents their interests.*** For example, there are teachers who feel that they are systematically kept off the ILT and are not offered other leadership positions because principals want ILT members who will support their agendas. They cite as evidence for their opinions the fact that principals may hand-pick ILT members. (In many of our sample schools, ILT members are team/cluster/grade-level leaders. In some, they are selected by the principals and in others they are selected by their teams.) ILT members, themselves, worry about the extent to which their views are genuinely considered by the administration of their schools. We do not know whether or to what extent these teachers' claims are accurate, but it is essential that administrators hear them and determine what they can do to alleviate these perceptions if ILTs are to fulfill their potential. Unless these conditions and feelings are addressed, even Type 3 and 4 ILTs will see their influence limited to those staff members who see them and their role as legitimate.

- ***Members of higher functioning ILTs, Types 3 and 4, may experience more tension in implementing their work than members of Type 1 and 2 ILTs.*** This is due to the fact that the Type 3 and 4 ILTs are attempting to have a greater impact on their colleagues and on the school as a whole. These schools may need help in dealing with the tensions and developing strategies for engaging more of their colleagues with the reform. If this kind of help does not transpire, perhaps through the support of a WSC coach and the principal taking a stronger role, Type 3 and 4 ILT members may become frustrated in their leadership roles.

B: Looking At Student Work Groups. With these conclusions about the types of ILTs in mind, we turned our analysis to the ways in which schools were implementing their LASW groups. While the ILT is an opportunity for a small number of teachers to collaborate and focus on the school's instructional program, LASW groups are designed to involve virtually all teachers in collaborative work that focuses on the links between their teaching and curriculum, the standards, and their own students' learning. The idea is that by sharing samples of student work and discussing the work in light of standards and with the use of a protocol, teachers will get a better understanding of a) the links between their assignments and the work produced, b) areas in which students need more and/or different instructional strategies, and c) the links between the assignments and the standards. In addition, out of the discussion teachers will have the opportunity to develop next steps, implement them, and report back to their LASW groups on the implications of having taken those steps.[28]

Teachers and principals have struggled to understand the purpose of LASW on an ongoing basis. Some thought that it was an exercise to be done early in the reform that would be "checked-off" as completed. They did not understand that LASW was to become an integral part of their work. Others have never understood the importance of using a protocol to look at students' work. They assumed that LASW sessions need not differ significantly from what they might do informally when talking with colleagues. Some had difficulty getting beyond assessing the work to linking what they learned from that process with the next steps in instruction. And some continued to focus on the quality of the work in light of the child rather than in light of the standards. In contrast, other teachers have come to understand the value of LASW and the capacity it gives them to understand a) students' learning difficulties, b) the role their instruction plays in enabling students to produce high quality work, and c) the importance of implementing new teaching strategies and assessing their impact by looking at subsequent student work.[29] LASW has been a difficult component of the work to implement, but we agree with Gloria

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[28] Due to the literacy focus of LASW groups, middle schools vary in the extent to which they involve all teachers in LASW work in an ongoing way. Some have attempted to include all teachers by stressing the importance of writing in all curriculum areas. Others have involved teachers from only the four core content areas in LASW groups in an ongoing way. In these schools, teachers of other content areas were more likely to be involved only in the work of scoring and analyzing the performance-based writing assessments.

[29] Neufeld and Woodworth wrote about these aspects of LASW in the August 1998 evaluation report to the BPE.

Woods, Director of Cohorts I and II, that it is at the core of the whole-school change effort: it is "professional development that should be an integral and natural part of what schools do on an ongoing basis." Therefore, it is critical to understand its status at this juncture in the reform when schools are about to add an instructional focus on mathematics to their reform agenda. LASW should be as integral to schools' work in mathematics as it is to their work in literacy.

Our hypothesis was that there would be an association between the status of ILTs and LASW implementation because it was the ILT, initially, that supported the development and implementation of LASW sessions and established LASW as a priority. It was often ILT members who were trained in the initial use of a protocol. If ILTs were not well-established, we doubted they would have the capacity to lead this component of the Essentials. Additionally, we believed that the same factors that would likely lead to different levels of ILT implementation, for example, the principal's understanding and leadership of reform and the social context of the school, would similarly affect LASW implementation.

In conducting our analysis, we were aware that one new feature of the reform agenda, the implementation of performance-based assessments, might change the kind of work brought to LASW sessions. Rather than bring daily classroom work to the sessions, teachers might bring the performance assessments. As Gloria Woods noted, this did happen and that change had consequences for the original purpose of LASW:

> LASW sessions have been focused mostly on assessments this year, especially in schools that did not have a solid foundation in the LASW process from the outset. I think we knew intuitively that once the benchmark assessments went districtwide, we would run the risk of schools focusing only on the assessment component of the LASW and not deepening their understanding of LASW.

The BPE-BAC's initial goal was to have teachers bring samples of daily student work to their LASW groups rather than work produced for a special purpose. By looking at such student work with a protocol, teachers would then focus on improving their daily practice. In light of the dominance of looking at work produced for performance assessment benchmark purposes during the 1999-2000 schoolyear, the BPE-BAC asked schools to spend approximately 50% of their time looking at this kind of work and 50% of their time looking at daily work during the 2000-2001 schoolyear.

In addition, the BPE-BAC knew that schools were not consistently using a protocol for the LASW work even when their groups did meet. To address this situation, the BPE-BAC crafted a series of questions for the spring 2000 SAS visits and updated the Phases Chart to "steer schools back on track to the original purpose of LASW." We completed our data collection, however, before these changes went into effect.[30] Our data confirm the BPE-BAC's conclusion that

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[30] For example, according to Woods, the revised Phases Chart says that a "school will train all staff in a protocol for LASW that is used consistently across the school," because without a protocol, "teachers are likely to just veer off and do their own thing," thereby losing the common language and standards for LASW.

LASW during the past school year focused primarily on examining performance-based assessments (which we discuss in Part C of this section of the report). Regardless of the kind of work brought to LASW sessions, however, we were still able to observe the sessions and talk to teachers and principals about their understanding of the LASW component of the reform agenda.

In order to determine whether there was an association between a school's ILT Type and the way it implemented LASW, we did a school-by-school analysis of our LASW observation and interview data in light of the criteria elaborated on pages six and seven. This analysis led us to create independently four types of LASW implementation. Our analysis revealed that schools with Type 1 ILTs were doing very little with LASW while schools with Type 4 ILTs were doing a great deal with their LASW sessions, even when those sessions focused on the examination of work produced for the performance-based assessments rather than on more daily kinds of work.[31] Without doubt, our analysis reveals a strong association between the quality of implementation of ILTs and the quality of implementation of LASW groups.

We turn next to a description of each LASW type and provide examples of the ways in which teachers and principals understand and implement this important professional development component of the whole-school change agenda.

Type 1 LASW Groups. Schools with Type 1 LASW groups include all of the schools that have Type 1 ILTs plus one school that has a Type 2 ILT. We placed schools in this category because they demonstrated one or more of the following characteristics: a) LASW rarely happened or happened only in small pockets of the school; b) principals made it clear that while they may have some understanding of why this work is important, they had not made it a priority; c) time set aside for LASW was frequently used instead for administrative purposes; d) facilitation of the LASW sessions was weak, e) weak facilitation led to shallow conversations and almost no opportunity for teachers to develop strategies with which to address students' learning needs. Facilitation was weak for a variety of reasons. For example, some facilitators did not yet have the requisite knowledge and understanding of LASW even if they had attended the BPE-BAC site facilitator training designed to prepare them for this role. Second, some facilitators tried to examine so many samples of work in each meeting that little actual time was available for in-depth consideration of the work and its implications for future practice. And, third, facilitators were sometimes stymied in their efforts by the principal's request to use time set aside for LASW for the transmission of administrative information.

> Composite Type 1 LASW. Teachers who had been standards facilitators – the school-based support role designed to assist teachers with the implementation of standards – often led Type 1 LASW groups which were scheduled for forty-five minutes. Actual meetings frequently lasted only thirty minutes, however, as teachers typically arrived

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See Appendix F for the updated Phases Chart. Appendix D includes the Spring 2000 SAS document.

[31] We found two instances of variation between ILT and LASW levels. One school with a Type 2 ILT was a Type 1with respect to LASW, and one school with a Type 4 ILT was a Type 3 with respect to LASW groups. All other schools had the same ILT as LASW rankings.

> late. Once started, the facilitator often spent additional time on announcements sent by the principal. Teachers might come to LASW meetings with copies of a sample of student writing and blank task descriptions to give to colleagues. The routine of looking at the work involved a) the teacher's brief explanation of the writing prompt, b) reading and scoring of the work, and c) a comparison of scores. There were no scoring disagreements at some Type 1 LASW meetings beyond, perhaps, a one point difference, and there was little discussion about the reasons for such differences. In other Type 1 LASW groups, however, there were considerable disagreements about the scores assigned to the same piece of student work as teachers struggled to understand the use of standards and a rubric to assess students' work. When agreement on scoring had been reached – sometimes by a vote and other times by the facilitator's declaring the correct score – the facilitator might offer suggestions for what that particular student needed to work on to improve the writing. Facilitators might also ask teachers to give suggestions for what the student should emphasize.

This composite Type 1 LASW group highlights a) the short amount of time available for the LASW group to do its actual work when the sessions occurred, b) weak facilitation that did not engage teachers in working with one another to understand the assignment, the work and its links to standards, c) primary attention to scoring the work, d) coming to agreement by means such as voting that precluded deep discussions, and e) the absence of an explicit discussion of the link between a student's work and the teacher's practice. While there might be discussion about what the student needed to do next in Type 1 LASW groups, the facilitators we observed did not lead teachers to discuss what they might do next to help improve the student's work. Teachers who facilitated Type 1 LASW groups did not have sufficient knowledge and skill with which to do this work. In addition, for a variety of reasons, schools with Type 1 LASW groups did not have coaches available to lead their LASW groups.

Interview data confirm these conclusions. With respect to time, principals admitted that they gave little attention to this aspect of the reform work.

> Looking at student work is probably our weakest area.... because teachers haven't received a message from me that says you need to be doing this, and you need to [do it] consistently, and I want to see evidence of it, etc., It gets lost in the myriad of other things that I ask them to do. (Administrator B)
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> We haven't done a great deal [about] trying to facilitate looking at student work sessions [because] we are in the process of changing from one protocol, to a totally different protocol. Because we're changing protocols, right now it's stopped. (Administrator D)

Teachers confirmed that when their LASW groups met, it was usually for a short period of time with even that time often given over to administrative issues.[32]

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[32] Experience suggests that forty-five minutes is not sufficient for most LASW sessions. Schools with more highly developed LASW Types have found ways to have longer blocks of time available.

> There have been times when we've gone to the meeting with the intention of looking at student work and other things would come up that would interfere with the intended agenda. So we'd end up not looking at student work. (Teacher I)

> Part of our meetings is going over student work. And it's one of the hardest things to be able to get done. Because of [putting] first, you know, logistical things. We try to set aside one meeting for [looking at] student work. And a lot of times if something gets pushed aside, LASW's what gets pushed aside....The principal was talking about making absolutely sure that one meeting gets set aside where that's all we do and we don't do any other business. But that's hard to do because you always have ongoing things that need to get done. (Teacher EE)

As a result, teachers in schools with Type 1 LASW groups have had some experience with LASW, but the experiences have been idiosyncratic and weak.

In addition, as noted in the composite, facilitation of the meetings has been quite weak. Observations and teachers' comments suggest that, as a result, most have gained only a rudimentary understanding of the LASW process and its purposes. Our data reveal, for example, that teachers still struggle with a) using a rubric to score student work, b) coming to agreement about its quality, and c) understanding the basic purpose of LASW.

> For that particular session, I think we had a great disparity among the eight or nine of us. And there weren't any 4's but there were two 3's, three 2's and three 1's or something like that. We'd get into the discussion. I'm taking the rubric literally. And I guess the other people that have been doing language arts a lot longer are sort of well, more lenient. ...I don't know if it changed the way I did anything but it made me aware of the fact. (Teacher EE)

> Well, first is usually, do we agree? We never agree. It's just your perspective. What does the child need to be a 4. What do you need to have the child become a 4? ...So your goal is to always improve yourself – I'm talking about the students – and for the teachers to improve their own teaching practice.... To be honest with you, besides [learning about the differences in the scores, I learn] nothing else. It's like how many ways can I explain this bottle of water? But then I'm flexible. I mean, you learn to talk about student work and see what [strategy] in your classroom, maybe, will work for my students and which, maybe, will not. But, besides that, I don't see the point. (Teacher A)

> [The LASW groups give] just other opinions. I can be biased because this is my student. I have a vested interest in that student and then I hear the 8th grade teacher say, "Maybe you're being a little too easy or too hard," or what have you. So it's just being able to have [the work] evaluated by another...a peer. Or another pair of eyes. I might be missing something that they see. That kind of thing. (Teacher II)

> Well it's supposed to work out that if everybody is part of the reviewing of the student work, we have a better focus on how the children are doing... So that everybody is tuned in to what's going on. Like if we do math, people get a look at the math. If we're doing language arts, everybody gets a look at the language arts. And you get a different perspective so that it's sort of like communication between us [and] we know what's going on with the students. (Teacher L)

Teachers who participated in Type 1 LASW sessions reported that the meetings did have some value. They helped reduce isolation by letting teachers "check in" with colleagues and receive feedback. LASW sessions enabled them to learn about requirements related to standards. And a few offered that by seeing exemplars that met the standards in LASW groups, they could better inform their students about what to include in their writing in order to achieve high scores.

> When [other teachers] bring in their 4's – I don't really have that many 4's – I can take that 4 and make copies of it and let my students see what an excellent paper is. And from there I can pick out why it was a 4. They don't get to see 4 papers in my class because I'm a special ed teacher. I have a lot of 1's, 2's, and 3's. Maybe one or two 4's. But they don't get to see nice, nice papers. So this lets them know that it is possible and this is what you need to do. This is the setup if you want a 4, and excellent paper. This is what you must do. (Teacher GG)

It is certainly important for teachers to gather exemplars of high quality work and, as this teacher suggests, it is important for students to see such exemplars. However, we want to stress that this teacher and others who are in schools with Type 1 LASW groups still tend to keep their focus on what the student must do to produce such a paper and not on what they, as teachers, must do to help their students produce such work. Our observations lead us to conclude that the weak facilitation of Type 1 LASW groups that is coupled with infrequent and short LASW sessions do not help teachers consider the implications of students's work for their next steps in teaching.

Finally, we noted in Type 1 LASW groups that many teachers still focus on the quality of a piece of student work **in light of the student who produced the work** rather than in light of the standards and exemplars of quality work. As a result of the weak facilitation of these groups, there is no one to help teachers make the difficult transition to considering the work in light of the standards. The next teacher's comment suggests that, while she and others are having what they consider to be valuable discussions, their LASW groups are not forwarding the goals of the district's reform agenda.

> [We are] looking at the different classes or samples of work from the different classes and using task descriptors to rate them, and talk about the different issues. And it's very helpful and very interesting. **We all have different views about doing different things.** Just to give you an example, last week we were looking at someone's student work, and **we gave a grade to the boy**, and the teacher was saying, "But I know the boy, and I look at the boy as a whole when I decide if he's making progress or not. But **you don't know the child, so you see the**

> **child's work differently." Some of us, including myself, said, "Well, according to this [benchmark] the kid is not ready, should not be passed." But she said, "But I know the child." So we looked at something and we disagreed**, but she had more information on the child, too,...So those are the kind of things [we discuss]. **And it makes you think: this is a good idea, looking at the whole child.** So many things come out of these conversations, it's unbelievable. (Teacher FF)

Teachers in schools with Type 1 LASW groups may not yet understand the deep purpose of LASW, but they value the opportunity to learn from one another and to clarify what students need to know and know how to do. This is encouraging. However, it is troubling that after three or four years of implementing standards-based reform, these teachers still emphasize assessing students' work in light of teachers' expectations about what the students can do rather than in light of the district's standards. In our view and certainly in the view of the BPE-BAC, it is essential for teachers to understand the value of assessing the **work** against the standards and then developing teaching strategies in light of the needs of the particular student. Without such an orientation, it is unlikely that teachers will have a) sufficiently high expectations for all of their students, or b) a set of teaching strategies designed to help students achieve at the desired performance standards.

Type 1 LASW groups are at this early stage for many of the same reasons that these schools have Type 1 (and in one case Type 2) ILTs. Principals of these schools, for a variety of reasons, have not given LASW groups or their ILTs any genuine opportunities to operate effectively. They have not oriented themselves toward the task of developing teacher capacity nor of creating a collaborative school culture that focuses on instruction. As long as the ILTs and LASW groups function at such low levels, we doubt that the whole-school reform model adopted by the BPE-BAC and the BPS can be implemented sufficiently to provide students with genuine opportunities to learn.

Type 2 LASW Groups. What most distinguished schools with Type 2 LASW groups from those with Type 1 LASW groups was the fact that their principals encouraged teachers to look at student work – whether it was associated with the performance-based assessment or focused on daily work – and created time in which LASW could happen. In addition, a few principals and vice principals occasionally attended LASW sessions, further emphasizing the importance of the work. However, facilitation of the sessions, even by those who had attended the BPE-BAC site facilitator training sessions, was often as weak as in Type 1 LASW groups. Facilitators seemed unsure of how to use either protocols or scoring rubrics. And, some teachers and/or teams still refused to participate in this required Essential of whole-school improvement.

Schools with Type 2 LASW groups varied in the frequency with which they met to look at student work – from once a month for 90 minutes to twice a month for 45 minutes each to only several times a year.[33] Coaches voiced their concern about the drawback of holding LASW sessions only once each month, pointing out that it was difficult to establish any continuity with such infrequent meetings. They also raised concerns about the limits imposed by the 45 minute sessions. However, coaches had little impact or involvement with LASW at these schools. Principals, too, voiced frustration with the limited extent and quality of LASW groups at their schools.[34] Nonetheless, some teachers found the sessions valuable because they provided an opportunity for them to work with and learn from colleagues.

> Composite Type 2 LASW. Type 2 LASW sessions varied with respect to whether teachers actually used the time for LASW. Sessions that were billed as LASW groups sometimes were used for other purposes related to instruction. For example, teachers might discuss the learning needs of ESL students or talk about students' progress based on running records. Such sessions were not formalized by the use of a protocol and did not include examination of an assignment or the scoring of student work. They did, however, enable teachers to present difficulties that they faced in teaching students and receive suggestions for how to better teach specific content to the students in question. In contrast, other Type 2 LASW meetings were more explicitly focused on scoring student work in light of a specific rubric. Many teachers in these groups still struggled to understand and use rubrics. They argued over scoring students' work due to differences in how they interpreted both the rubric and the demands of the assignment. Scoring decisions from one student to another were often based on inconsistent interpretations of the rubric and/or the assignment. Sometimes, faced with such disagreements, teachers voted to arrive at a score. Weak facilitation was associated with the difficulties confronting teachers in these Type 2 LASW groups. Facilitators seemed insufficiently familiar either with the rubric or with the strategies of facilitation. They seemed unable to focus the conversations, provide guidance on how to use the rubric, or allocate time to different aspects of the work. From time to time, principals participated in LASW groups, sharing knowledge they might have gained at one of their professional development sessions.

Despite the weaknesses inherent in these LASW sessions, they occurred more regularly than sessions in schools with Type 1 LASW groups and teachers were expected to be involved. Principals expressed frustration, however, about the fact a) that some teachers still chose not to participate, and b) LASW had not yet become an accepted, valued part of teachers' work.

Some teachers who participated regularly in the LASW groups found value in sharing aspects of instruction with their colleagues.

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[33] Teachers' concerns about their job expectations, associated with the teachers contract as well as principal/teacher antagonism stood in the way of more frequent LASW sessions and the creation of a collaborative culture in some of these schools, as we noted when discussing Type 2 ILTs. In addition, there were teachers in these schools who did not participate in LASW groups.

[34] Stressful and sometimes antagonistic relations between principals and teachers led to some of the difficulties encountered with implementing LASW groups.

> I honestly feel that when you work as a grade level or with other teachers, you just learn so much and it just helps to be part of a team. That's probably not the main goal. Of course, you're having the students in mind. But when you get ideas, you share. And sometimes, when I'm concerned, I feel better because I find others have the same issues. (Teacher D)

> The teacher makes a presentation and usually it's either something that is a key question or something they have developed specifically for this [LASW session]. They make the presentation and the others react to it. It gives you affirmation, especially in the writing, if it's a 2 or 3 or a 4. That has been very helpful to me because, not having spent as much time in third grade as they have, [I can]see what the expectation should be for a third grade. And [I can now] look at [the work] in comparison with the standards the city has delineated. (Teacher K)

> I think [LASW] really is the best thing that has happened in recent years in Boston, because everybody's working together. It's not as though my class is doing something and another class is doing something else. We're all trying to collaborate and share, and really get the children where they should be....I think originally people were not used to sharing their work or showing others what their children were doing. Now that we see what other people are doing, and especially some of the teachers who were having trouble, maybe, getting children where they wanted to, like it's nice for them to see a teacher who may not have as much trouble, see what they're doing, and talk to them and see what strategies they're using. (Teacher G)

Experienced teachers in one school also spoke about the value of these kinds of discussions for new teachers. They noted that LASW and regular team meetings provided opportunities for new teachers to participate in conversations about how to improve their work. These experienced teachers valued the opportunities to help their less experienced colleagues.[35]

LASW, sometimes in combination with the performance-based assessments, has led teachers to pay greater attention to the alignment of curriculum and assessment. One LASW site facilitator pointed out that, in the beginning, each grade-level teacher developed her own key questions. Now, as a result of sharing the results of students responses to key questions at LASW groups, grade-level teachers are working together to develop grade-level key questions.[36] They realize that this helps them in examining student work in two ways. First, they are all familiar with the book the children read prior to answering the key question because they all agreed to assign the same book. This eliminated the problem of examining student work related to a book they did not know. Second, and as a result, teachers report that their conversations with one another can focus on issues associated with teaching the same book and addressing the same key questions. A few teachers noted that if they have children who are not performing at the level they expect, they can look to colleagues for strategies and ideas about how to get them to that level. And, as the next teacher notes, this coordinated approach to LASW is helping them to realize that each grade is not an isolated unit in the school.

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[35] We know that supporting new teachers was a focus of some LASW groups and of team meetings. Because we did not have any new teachers in our sample, we do not have their perspective on what they learned or how they experienced such meetings.

[36] Key questions focus on literature and should support the implementation of standards by stressing students' use of critical thinking skills.

> People are realizing that it's a continuum. I don't think that was true before. I think everybody thought 1st grade had its own agenda, and 2nd grade, so forth. I think you're seeing, especially since we started the looking at student work and since the MCAS, that it's a cumulative effort. And when they get to the 4th grade, hopefully they have all these skills that they need. ...I don't think the other grade levels knew what we really wanted in the upper grades, what we hoped that the children would be achieving. (Teacher G)

Teachers are more open to sharing their students' work; they see the value of seeking help from colleagues on a regular basis; and they support better curriculum and assessment alignment within and across grades. However, their experiences within their schools are idiosyncratic – not all teachers participate in such discussions and the quality of the discussions seems to be associated with the particular teachers who choose to involve themselves in LASW. In addition, there is little expert facilitation of their work, and, therefore, little opportunity for them to get better at LASW. The weak facilitation is unlikely to enable these or other teachers to expand their knowledge and skill with respect to LASW with an eye toward improving teaching and learning. Finally, to the extent that the reform agenda rests, in part, on what teachers can learn from using a protocol that focuses their attention on, for example, the assignment as well as the standards and the student work, these teachers are without such learning opportunities.

On a more positive note, the data reported here suggest that **a few** Type 2 LASW groups are poised to move to a higher level. At the start of the year, teachers in these groups were coming to LASW sessions because they were required to do so. However, coaches noted that near the end of the year, a few teachers were asking to bring in work that concerned them rather than sustain the group's focus on looking at work from the latest key question. The challenge in schools with Type 2 LASW groups is to engage all teachers in the work in ways that enable them to realize that this strategy can provide them with opportunities to work more effectively with their students and with each other.

Type 3 LASW Groups.[37] Type 3 LASW groups were distinguishable from Type 2 LASW groups by the following factors: a) all teachers were at least nominally involved in LASW – they attended the meetings even if they did not participate very much, b) principals attended more meetings and took a more active role in discussions, c) while teachers in these schools did not necessarily use a protocol for LASW, there was considerable attention to "next steps" in their discussions, d) coaches played a significant role in making LASW a key part of the schools' normal operations as a result of principals' support for their work and overall leadership of the reform, e) sessions were better facilitated in that those who led the sessions understood what LASW should involve and stressed the importance of linking students' work to standards and then to instruction, f) schools with Type 3 LASW groups demonstrated strong working relationships between the coach, the LASW facilitator, if there was one, and the teachers which allowed the quality of LASW to improve, and g) LASW was linked to the ongoing work of the ILT, something that was not the case in schools with Type 1 and 2 LASW groups.

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[37] One Type 3 school did no LASW work during the 1999-2000 school year as a result of taking on implementation of the performance-based assessments. We did not consider it to be Type 1 or 2, however, because it had been holding regular LASW sessions during the 1998-1999 school year.

> Composite Type 3 LASW. Type 3 LASW groups met weekly for 45 minutes, monthly for 90 minutes or for a duration in-between. Some meetings began late as teachers straggled in, but they quickly began to focus on the work presented for the session. The coach might begin by requesting that the group continue giving feedback to a teacher whose student work – most often a key question – they began examining the previous week. In these discussions, facilitators frequently reminded teachers that scores must be related to standards and not to the quality of the work in light of the specific student or the array of work completed by the class. Considerable time was given to discussions about next steps the teacher might take to help the students who had done poorly on the key question. Several teachers might offer suggestions from their own repertoires. The facilitator then often asked the teacher to discuss what she would try next. In Type 3 LASW groups, such a question frequently led to additional discussions of the dilemmas of teaching. For example, one teacher reported that students with low scores seemed to have difficulty developing their thesis statements. However, she continued, she provided little guidance with thesis statements because she believes students do better work when they develop their own ideas for a thesis. The entire LASW group then discussed thesis statements: how to approach them, what they tell their students to include in them, and so forth. Such leadership by the facilitator encouraged deeper discussions of the work and the pedagogical strategies the teacher could try. Despite the overall focus on student work and instruction, some Type 3 LASW groups would get off track and begin discussing other pressing school issues. The coach or other facilitator would steer the conversation back to LASW. At other times, teachers brought too much work to the table and felt pressured to get through each piece by the end of the meeting. Again, coaches and teacher facilitators helped avoid the problem of speeding the process and having superficial conversations by suggesting that some work be held until the next meeting. At their best, Type 3 LASW sessions demonstrated many examples of teachers exchanging ideas and participating in conversation about instructional strategies connected to student work that was assessed in light of standards.

There is broad variation in the quality of implementation of LASW in Type 3 groups. Many teachers still bring student work to sessions and participate in discussions because they are required to do so. They participate because they understand that their principals expect them to support implementation of this Essential. On the other hand, many teachers who once had this compliance orientation now value LASW and participate in meetings because they can learn from colleagues and value supporting their colleagues' learning. These teachers, in particular, expressed disappointment at the large emphasis on performance assessments in LASW groups during the 1999-2000 school year that grew out of the district's implementation of performance assessments. They wanted to regain the opportunity to use the sessions to look at daily student work. Finally, unlike their counterparts in Type 2 LASW groups, teachers in Type 3 LASW groups are engaged with the work on a schooltime basis and the work is closely linked to the work of the ILTs and achievement of the schools' SMART goals.

Teachers in schools with Type 3 LASW groups, like their colleagues in Type 1 and 2 LASW groups, valued the opportunity to share with one another. They appreciated the chance to learn from colleagues and to focus on aligning their work within and across grade levels. Their more advanced status with LASW came across, however, in the details of their conversations with respect to 1) using rubrics for identifying high and low quality work, 2) the role of the coach in supporting their LASW groups, 3) using the results of LASW sessions to make changes in their work with students, and 4) their willingness to make themselves vulnerable by sharing student work that was far below their expectations.

Using Rubrics. Type 3 LASW groups, for the most part, were not struggling with the process of coming to agreement on scores for students' work.[38] Rather, they were beginning to wonder whether the rubrics they used were capable of distinguishing, in particular, high quality writing. This issue was salient in groups that had relied on the BPS Task Descriptions to assess key questions.[39] As the next teachers noted, with more experience, they and their colleagues were increasingly troubled by the quality of writing that achieved a high score using the Task Description.

> As we were looking at the writing we were noticing that some classes would have a key question and everybody's product looked exactly the same. It was like the teachers were so pressured that they were just giving sort of an overall formula for exactly what the key question was. And the writing didn't have a lot of style and voice but it matched the criteria on the BPS task description. We started talking about that and how one teacher may grade that [work] well because she's using the task description point to point to point. And then another teacher may think that's really bad writing because really good writing has a lot more style and voice and different types of things in it, but not necessarily what the task description has. So we spent hours and hours and hours hashing out what's good writing, what isn't. [And we asked] are we teaching writing based on the components of good writing, or are we teaching them to the task description, to see what would be a formulaic 4, not necessarily like a really good piece of

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[38] This is not to say that discussions were never about scoring. Sometimes LASW groups addressed issues of scoring with a rubric when new teachers were unfamiliar with the rubric and/or the process. In addition, when schools were in the process of refining or adapting their rubrics, they attended to the impact of proposed changes on the scores students would achieve and the link between those scores and the standards.

[39] When teachers were not assessing writing prompts as part of their performance assessment work, they reported that, most often, they assessed student work completed in response to a Key Question. Only a few teachers in Type 3 or 4 LASW groups reported bringing other kinds of work to their sessions.

> writing? So that's an example of how we looked at the student work. We saw that we had a problem, we tried to find the source of the problem, [and] to see if we can then fix the problem. (Teacher Q)

> The thrust of LASW this year has pretty much been looking at the key questions. We have a problem with the rubrics, the city rubrics for the key question. Because we feel, I mean, we've looked at a lot of work, and I've seen work of students that really show a real deep understanding of the reading, and it's written beautifully and it has a beginning with a question or an ending with a question. I mean, really good writing. And just because it doesn't fit a lot of these things on the rubric, we have big discussions about that. We're finding more and more the kind of writing that we think shows a deep understanding of the literature, and creativity, and really good use of language are these ones that don't fit the city rubrics. So we are working on that a lot. (Teacher JJ)

Teachers on Type 3 LASW groups who had not been focused on Task Descriptions also reported more attention to their rubrics and the fact that they now realized that the rubrics had to be good if they were to help teachers help students to produce higher quality work.

> I feel like the focus is more on the rubrics now, and how we are using the rubrics. We all seem to know very easily now what's a level 1, and what's a level 2 and 3, and we all agree. There's no such thing as somebody thinks it's a 1, and someone thinks it's a 3 kind of thing. We're much closer about what we think on that. But the rubrics are what we're concentrating on now. The rubrics always test what we're looking for, and how we would adapt our rubrics [to do that] is what we're focusing on now. Although we never really stated it that way, it just seems that every time we go that's what we're talking about. (Teacher Z)

In our view, these teachers' comments and those of many others reveal a sophisticated understanding of rubrics and their potential to inform instruction. Many teachers who work on Type 3 LASW groups now understand the value of the rubrics, their importance in assessing student work, and the necessity for them to reflect high standards of performance. Although the process of struggling with rubrics can be frustrating, teachers in these schools who go through this process are arriving at greater shared agreement about their standards-based expectations for students' work.

The Role of the Coach or Site-Based LASW Facilitator. In discussing Type 1 and 2 LASW groups, we stressed the absence of coach facilitators and the weakness of site-based LASW facilitation. Type 3 LASW groups have coaches who facilitate their work and site-based LASW facilitators who are getting better at their work due to support from their coaches. In these schools, teachers identified specific ways in which coaches were helping them improve LASW. For example,

> I think [the coach] is helping us to try and connect LASW to instruction more than we might have last year. She's making sure that we know what the instructional goal of the work was. It isn't just that here's the rubric, and we assess the work. She wants the teachers to state what we were trying to find out when we did this assessment. She's helping us refine LASW. I think she will make us agree to an approach [this year]. Last year people would say "I know we have a protocol, but that didn't work for me, so I'm doing it a different way." The meetings wouldn't go well, because we had to figure out what the protocol was. She will help us define the protocol for looking at student work. It's getting more sophisticated . And a lot of it is [because] the administration continues to value looking at student work by making sure that she schedules the time for it, because it would never happen otherwise. (Teacher AA)

> I presented three pieces of work. [The coach] introduced us to a form that we can use. She asked me about what I wanted from the students. We talked about whether, in fact, I achieved my goal. And then we talked about it all together [as a group]. (Teacher Z)

Teachers who work as LASW site facilitators in Type 3 LASW groups express considerable understanding of the purpose of LASW and what might make it difficult for their colleagues. Their knowledge and skill enable them to serve as teacher leaders of their LASW groups.

> I think what happens is people start to look at student work and they look at it like a way of grading, like A, B, C, D, and they start to scale in their classrooms. They look at a piece of work and they think it's good because it's the best in their class. But the way that I look at student work is really in relation to the standards and is this [piece of work] meeting the standards? I don't feel like a bad teacher when I have to say that I don't have anyone in my class who's meeting the standards to the fullest. And I think it's hard for a lot of staff members to say, "No, this is not good work. This is not meeting the standards." Because they want to say, "It's good; it's the best in my class." I think that's one of the major difficulties. And it's not everyone. And the other thing, there are still people who when they look at student work it doesn't instruct their teaching all the time. It's always instructing mine; I'm always thinking about what am I going to do next. (Teacher QQ)

Another site-based facilitator talks about a strategy she used with colleagues to embed standards, rubrics and, ultimately, high quality LASW into the development of a unit.

> We have a unit that we're doing with the entire grade. And I think the time that we spent [planning this] provides us with the foundation in terms of being able to put together a rubric for the grade on this particular study. We will have an idea of what an exemplary piece of work is, and what's important [to include]. We will all agree. I think we'll be able to come to an agreement around what's an A,

> B, C, and D. Having shared the time and sharing students' work across the grade level gives us a pretty good idea of the range of abilities, as well as what the feelings of our colleagues are as to each and every piece of work. Some of us grade a little more difficult; we grade harder; some grade easier. So, I think when we do something together like a unit throughout the grade, we probably have more fruitful discussions in terms of assessing the students' work. (Teacher RR)

Without question, these site-based LASW facilitators are engaged in leadership work with their LASW groups. Their schools are developing teachers' capacity to continue LASW should the time come when they are without external coaching assistance.

Nonetheless, our data suggest that these LASW facilitators still need additional professional development to improve their capacity to lead this important work. Some of them need to become more sophisticated about the range of "next steps" available to teachers and to the possibility of seeking sources of "best practices" outside of their schools. Some need, in addition, to improve their facilitation skills especially when they deal with resistant or less knowledgeable teachers. Coaches provide site-based facilitators with some of this needed professional development, but they did not have enough time to both lead LASW groups and also further the expertise of site-based LASW facilitators. Overall, however, a great deal of LASW work is ongoing in these schools because of the expertise of the coaches and the increasing capacity of school-based LASW site facilitators.

Principals in schools with Type 3 LASW groups recognize the hard work done by teachers, coaches and LASW site facilitators. They report being pleased with the growth they have seen in implementation of this important Essential.

> They've become very good at it. They're really fine tuning the work. When they were looking at the work of the students in the past it was, "Do they have this?" Check. "Do they have it?" Yes. Check, yes, check. Now they're asking the question, "They have all this, but is it good?" And then they start asking questions. "What does this child know?" and, "Why did that child grasp that concept and this one didn't? What happened here?" They have turned the page. It's not anymore that child can't learn. But what did I do? Or what didn't I do?. Or, what should I do next? (Administrator E)

Using LASW to Make Changes in Instruction. Teachers in Type 3 LASW groups say that they spend a lot of time in their meetings talking about "next steps." Our analysis suggests that they construe "next steps" in two distinct ways. First, they think about how to improve an assignment the next time they implement it, as the following teacher noted.

> There was one assignment we were looking at where, as we talked about it, we started focusing on how the initial assignment could have been redone so that the work would have probably been better the first time around, because [the assignment] would have been clearer. (Teacher KK)

This kind of discussion often addresses the prompt that was used for a writing performance assessment or the key question that led to students' written work.

Second, teachers think about immediate next steps to help a student who was floundering after a particular piece of instruction.

> We try to help each other. When someone's especially frustrated with what they got from their question, [we might ask], "Well, how could you reword this?" Or suggest, "Maybe you should ask this [something else] first." We try to help each other. It's supportive rather than evaluative. We're really practicing more and more how to do this. (Teacher CCC)

> I think that's the most important for us: to look at exactly what the child did and what we were asking the child to do -- what did the child do and what are the next steps for us in helping that child? And I think we spent more time on what are the next steps. (Teacher UU)

> If the other kindergarten teacher has something that she brings to student work that I think is very useful, I will say to her, "Will you share with me how you introduced this? Was it effective? How would you improve on it?" We all realize that self-analysis helps you to grow, and so we'll say to each other, "Well, I tried this, but it didn't really work as well as I'd like it to. Does anybody have a better suggestion?" And there's no unease about doing that. Because we're all working for the same goal, which is, to make every one of these children confident and successful. (Teacher S)

In light of the schools' focus on literacy, it is not surprising that most of the work presented at LASW groups relates to writing and/or writing about a piece of literature. However, we think it is important to note that, with the early implementation of the mathematics focus, a few teachers were beginning to bring samples of students' mathematics work to their groups. One elementary teacher (Teacher DDD) talked about the way her grade-level looked at students' work after administering a common end-of-unit assessment. She reported that team members looked at the work with two purposes in mind: 1) to see if the students understood the math they had been taught, and 2) to see if the assessment teachers developed included good questions that uncovered what students were learning. Another teacher pointed out the benefit of looking at students' math work in light of the new emphases in both curriculum and instruction.

> Looking at math is particularly useful because what we're expecting [from students] is new, [and] because we're all struggling with the math and the way we teach math. And what we would accept in the past is not really good math [anymore] because it's not only the correct answer [that matters]. We were not [in the past] looking at the way the children came to the answers, the strategies they were using. Right now, looking at student work and realizing it's [important] how they come to the answer and making sure that they understand it is foremost in

> our minds. And I think when somebody presented Problem of the Day and we saw the different ways that different children came about with the correct answer but in a roundabout – it was helpful to see everybody struggling with the same kind of situation, because all of us are struggling with that right now. (Teacher UU)

These teachers identify the importance of examining student work from a variety of content areas. To support teachers' efforts, coaches will need to be knowledgeable about the content, pedagogy, and assessments embedded in the reforms. Without this knowledge, they will be unable to facilitate teachers taking the "next steps" that represent best practices in mathematics.

Sharing Student Work That Demonstrates Little Student Learning. The data we have document that teachers who participate in Type 3 LASW groups are increasingly willing to look to colleagues for suggestions on what to do next when their teaching does not quite lead to desired results. What is even more significant, in our view, is that some teachers in these LASW groups are volunteering to bring student work (rather than "waiting their turn") in order to get help with teaching that is leading to little obvious student learning. They seem quite concerned about improving their teaching and helping their students and little concerned about looking foolish in front of their peers. This is a great step forward in the establishment of a collegial, instructionally focused culture that can lead to improved student achievement.

A coach who was heavily involved with facilitating LASW groups at one school with Type 3 LASW groups described this development, noting that the teacher's use of her LASW group denoted great appreciation of this strategy. We note, as well, that the coach's goal over time was to move teachers to such higher levels of understanding and implementation of this Essential.

> [One teacher] brought in a few papers one day and asked the group to look at them and confirm to her that they were all 1's, which they were. Then she said, "What did I do wrong? I did a graphic organizer; we did drafts and peer conferencing." [This teacher] is able to do that because she's a more developed, sophisticated teacher. ...What I've been trying to do is get everybody on a cycle where they're bringing their own instructional dilemmas to the table. ...In the beginning stages you want people to be thinking about what how good is good enough and coming to some consistency around it and then making that public with the students. A more sophisticated use is trying to get teachers to use LASW as a way of self- improvement. To really bring instructional dilemmas that they're truly grappling with, not something because it's my turn so I think of something off the top of my head to bring to the group. But that there's some intrinsic desire to improve as a teacher and to grapple with some of the instructional dilemmas that you face. And that's sort of where I'd like to get them. I don't think we're there yet. (Coach C)

While all teachers might not yet be there, another teacher in the school described using her LASW group for help with an immediate teaching problem.

> One [assignment] that I brought was just a first draft we had done in class about why we have seasons. It had very frustrating answers on it. The LASW was actually helpful, because it gave me some ideas for what to do with what I had gotten. It was a unit, the unit on astronomy where one whole chapter is about the motion of the Earth and the Sun and one section of it is about seasons, and we had read that in the book, and I had done a little shadow play with the globe and the light and sort of trying to let them see it. Then I has asked the students to just explain what we had seen . And it was as if none of the reading or discussion or demonstration had happened. That part was frustrating. ...My colleagues were good at showing me the fragments of things that kids had caught. I had just looked at it [and said], Oh, they don't get it. But [my colleagues] were able to say, "Well, they do get this piece", so at least I began to feel like I had maybe cracked the facade of misunderstanding, so that little bits of it were filtering in. And we talked about what would be the real boiled down essence, what would be the answer we would be looking for? And that sort of helped clarify for me, when I looked at kids' writings, what I should be looking for... (Teacher KK)

As we said at the outset, there is a wide span of expertise with respect to LASW in schools that have Type 3 LASW groups. Nonetheless, the schools are notable for their commitment to doing this work – even if all teachers are not yet fully convinced of its value – and for the increasing skillfulness of their implementation. In our view, because many of these schools have established strong ILTs, they have an emerging culture of collegial relations that focus on instruction. ILT members connect with their teams or grade level members to keep them abreast of the ILTs work. In addition, teachers inform the ILTs work through their discussions with its members. ILTs members, our data suggest, have leadership positions in their schools and are often strong members of their LASW groups. Principals have demonstrated their commitment to the work of the ILT and to the implementation of LASW. Because most teachers and all of the principals have agreed to move forward with the work, coaches and school-based site facilitators have real opportunities to help teachers use their LASW groups as professional development sessions.

Type 4 LASW Groups. A small number of schools have Type 4 LASW groups which we distinguish from Type 3 LASW groups on the basis of four features. First, conversations among teachers in Type 4 LASW groups demonstrated a more highly developed understanding of the literacy strategies – best practices – that are embedded in the programs they are implementing than we heard from their counterparts in schools with Type 3 LASW groups.[40] Second, meetings often resulted in actions that were taken and then reported on at subsequent meetings. Third, although they did not use formal protocols, teachers decided together how they wanted to approach looking at, scoring and then discussing the student work. Coaches or administrators helped structure the meetings, but it was the teachers who kept the conversations going. Teachers, however, wanted to maintain coach support for this work. Although they agreed that teachers had the capacity to lead the groups, without coach support they feared that the time for LASW would be used for other kinds of work. Fourth, student work was scored using a teacher/administrator/coach developed and agreed-upon, schooltime rubric.

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[40] Some teachers in other schools may have similar knowledge. However, we did not hear them talk about their work or students' work in the same way.

> Composite Type 4 LASW. Type 4 LASW meetings happened regularly for between 60 and 75 minutes with most teachers participating actively in the conversations. Teachers brought samples of both ongoing student work and work produced for performance assessments to their meetings. Discoveries that grew out of examining the work led them to try new teaching strategies. For example, LASW led teachers to realize that many students who could write fairly well had not responded appropriately to a writing prompt. While the prompt called for a descriptive essay, many students wrote stories. In discussing this finding, teachers realized that it likely happened because the teacher who brought the work had been spending a lot of time on story writing. Through further discussion, teachers agreed that, as a team, they wanted students to be better able to ascertain what was called for by different prompts. They did not, however, want to teach students that certain words or phrases suggested certain types of responses. Nor did they want to anticipate what kind of prompt might be on the MCAS and then teach only that kind of writing. Instead, they agreed that they wanted to promote analytical skills that would allow students to differentiate among prompts that called for a range of responses. By the end of the LASW session, teachers had decided to try a "mini-lesson" in which they would ask students to match prompts and responses and then talk with the students about how they knew that a particular prompt matched with a particular response. They also discussed other strategies they might try, for example, giving students a variety of prompts and having a discussion with them about how they went about deciding what kind of response was required by the prompt. In talking about how they would teach this, the meeting facilitator brought up ideas that are presented in the book *Mosaic of Thought* that call for teachers to model reading strategies that are, for them, automatic. The parallel here, noted the facilitator, would be to model the thinking skills that allow experienced writers to know how to formulate a response to a question. Teachers agreed that it would be helpful for them to try this kind of strategy with their students.

This composite demonstrates the four distinguishing features of Type 4 LASW groups noted above. And, it highlights a fifth feature: teachers talked not only about what each of them must do individually, but about the needs of the grade-level or grade-spans and what all of them must do. They talked about issues that they have as a group and tried to craft group solutions. Of course, at times, they discussed issues that pertained to individuals. But, the frequent presence of group issues and group solutions reflected what we see as a highly developed, collegial culture that is focused on instruction and in which teachers work together rather than in isolation. It is a culture in which virtually all teachers understand the value of rubrics, have confidence in one another's ability to reliably score student work with a rubric, and acknowledge the centrality of standards to their work. These are important aspects of teachers' knowledge and skill. Developing them, as well as developing the high functioning ILTs, have led teachers and administrators to share a culture that values teamwork and reflection – based on knowledge gleaned through a variety of professional development opportunities – as a route to improved teaching and learning.

> I think we've been doing this [LASW across grades] for at least four years, and it's a lot of extra work. [But] when you do it, you come away feeling that you know your students. You come away also [with ideas] because the teachers share ideas. Why don't you try this, this, that? It makes a better informed teacher. [It gets us] to try things out. A lot of teachers need to try things out [but] a lot of teachers are afraid. We're trying to move away from that. (Teacher EEE)

Teachers in Type 4 LASW groups seem poised to carry on this work because it is becoming integral to how they function professionally.

Given what we describe as their increased capacity, it is not surprising that teachers who worked in these schools also demonstrated flexibility in using what they had learned. Members of Type 4 LASW groups were able to move smoothly from looking at literacy-based work to looking at mathematics. The next quote identifies the transfer of both the approach – looking at the assignment – and the strategy – teachers volunteering to try new strategies for their colleagues.

> Our biggest thing that we did this year in math was looking at assignments. And it's interesting because that's how LASW in literacy started, with writing a good quality prompt or assigning a question. So it's interesting that's how we entered into the work for math as well. We might talk about 3 or 4 instructional strategies or ways that you could teach it. And then we'll talk more in-depth about one or two [ways]. And then a teacher in the group will say, "I'll try that" and then they'll bring that [work] in. (Administrator K)

Finally, some Type 4 LASW groups have developed the capacity to self-monitor their work as the following example reveals:

> The team is phenomenal. Someone will present their student work and the person presenting will say, "I really didn't get what I wanted from the work." And then they're able to respectfully but firmly say, "Maybe you needed to do this," or "Maybe this didn't work because of this." [They are] very open, because they all respect each other as professionals. Every single one of them thinks the other one is a good teacher. And, like I was saying about the ILT, they are starting to facilitate the meetings, too. One of the things in LASW that I'm always harping on is, "Don't tell us about the students; don't tell us that they've come a long way, or that this is their strength and this is their weakness. Let's look at their work." I think as a facilitator that's one of the things you need to be militant about. I was in a meeting with that team and somebody started to do that and one of their colleagues stopped them and said, "Don't tell us about the student. I want to look at the work." (Coach D)

It is not that Type 4 LASW groups have reached the pinnacle of their development. They and their administrators continue to struggle with developing rubrics that adequately reflect the kind of work they want their students to produce. They now recognize that earlier efforts were either not clear enough or required too little in the way of student performance. We spoke of the significance of the start of these kinds of conversations in a few Type 3 LASW groups. In schools with Type 4 LASW groups, the discussions, more often, occur schooltime and teachers and administrators talk about specific features of the rubrics and the implications for practice that are becoming increasingly important.

> I like [the new rubric] a lot. We found a couple of things that we might want to tinker with as we've been using it to look at student work. Little tiny things that either needed to be a tiny bit more clear or have one word changed. But, I think it's working well. People seem to be real happy with it. When we sit down, we can said, "Okay. Every time we say 'many,' this is what we mean. Every time we say 'skillful,' this is what we mean." We have it really clear in our minds what the parameters would be. It informs the teaching a little more clearly, and it makes assessment clearer, too. ...We have not attached exemplars yet, but we discussed the rubric in terms of what work might look like in our classrooms [so that we could] get to "How do you tell a kid what this should look like?" But even more than that, "How you tell a kid how to get there." That's the tricky part. We all know what it should be in our heads; how do we get it in their heads in a way that they can understand and manipulate? (Teacher BB)

Teachers in Type 4 LASW groups value the work for many of the reasons stated by teachers whose LASW groups are Type 3. They appreciate a) the opportunity to share with and learn from one another, b) the support provided by administrators and coaches, c) the opportunity to align their work with standards, and d) the collaborative, trustworthy culture in which they can share student work that resulted from teaching that missed the mark. These Type 4 LASW groups differ from Type 3 LASW groups, however, with respect to a) the high level of participation of virtually all teachers, b) the reduced need for coach or administrator leadership of their work (although teachers value the presence of these facilitators), and c) the practice of teachers trying new strategies that grow out of their LASW discussions and then bringing back the results of their trials – the student work – for another phase of assessment and discussion of the effectiveness of teaching strategies.

Part B: Summary and Conclusions: LASW Groups. The data we presented confirm the hypothesis that there would be an association between the status of ILTs and implementation of LASW groups. Without exception, schools that had high functioning ILTs also had high functioning LASW groups; schools with low functioning ILTs had low functioning LASW groups. We anticipated this finding because it was the ILTs that initially supported the development and implementation of LASW groups and established LASW as a priority. Furthermore, our findings reveal that the factors influencing variation in LASW development and implementation are similar to the factors that account for variation in the quality of ILTs.

- ***Schools vary significantly in the quality of their LASW groups.*** Again, approximately half of our sample, those we call Type 1 and Type 2 LASW groups, do not have well-functioning LASW groups. Some of these schools, in fact, implemented almost no

LASW groups although teachers might attempt this work during a team meeting. Again, the other half of our sample included schools in which LASW was either very well-established or was on a trajectory likely to lead it to this result. In schools with the most highly developed LASW groups, Type 3 and Type 4, the work done in these groups seems to be having an impact on the instructional practices used by teachers. Without question, the high level of implementation in Type 4 LASW groups reflects a collaborative, collegial culture in which teachers now think of it as routine to examine their practice in light of the quality of students' work.

- ***Schools' with weak ILTs have virtually no capacity to link LASW, when it does happen, with other aspects of whole-school improvement.*** LASW is not routinely discussed at ILT meetings. As a result, LASW remains, at best, an isolated activity that some teachers value in their individual teams and other teachers choose to skip. The weakness of the implementation of LASW groups is additional evidence of the still weak collegial, collaborative, instructionally focused culture in these schools.

- ***Several common factors seem to account for the high and low functioning LASW groups.*** As we concluded with respect to the functioning of ILTs, these factors include a) the quality of principal leadership, b) the willingness of teachers to work intimately with one another on sensitive issues related to their practice, and c) the interaction of the principal's leadership skills and the school's social context. With respect to this last point, we note that principals who have adversarial relationships with teachers are not well-situated to develop the collaborative culture required for establishing high quality LASW groups. In such schools, teachers may choose not to cooperate with the principal's initiatives even though they may agree with them. Such interpersonal dynamics stand in the way of moving forward the reform agenda with respect to LASW in the same ways that these dynamics thwarted some of the work of the ILTs.

- ***Groups of teachers can stand in the way of their schools moving forward with LASW.*** For example, some teachers observed faithfully the details of the BPS-BTU negotiated agreement and, as a result, attended LASW groups only for the minimal amount of time required by the agreement.[41] They are not convinced that LASW has anything to offer them. As a result, when they attend LASW groups, they rarely participate in the discussions.

- ***Schools with low functioning LASW groups lacked skillful LASW facilitators.*** For a number of reasons, some of these schools had little or no coaching support. Teacher facilitators who had attended the LASW Site Facilitator training sessions had not sufficiently learned either the conceptual underpinnings of LASW or the interpersonal skills necessary to the work. Schools with Type 1 and/or 2 LASW groups need strong coaching support from both better trained school-based facilitators and from coaches who have sufficient time to a) focus on this work with many LASW groups, and b) coach teachers who are learning to facilitate LASW groups. This finding suggest that LASW site facilitators in schools with Type 2 LASW groups, like those in schools with Type 1 LASW groups, need far more intensive professional development than the BPE-BAC anticipated. Type 3 LASW groups also need the continued attention of skillful facilitators.

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[41] We are referring to the BPS-BTU agreement in place during the 1999-2000 school year and we are not including the times during which teachers observed the work-to-rule agreement.

- ***Teachers in schools with high functioning LASW groups voiced concerns about the lack of sufficient time for discussions other than those focused on student work.*** Many teachers felt that LASW was the only work they should do during common planning times. As a result, they reported that they had no time available to discuss, for example, grade-level or school policies, or promotion decisions about individual students. In addition, some reported that they wanted to use some common planning times for discussions of education-related books or articles they had read. These teachers are conscientious about developing their LASW skills, but concerned that they are doing so at the expense of other important work. We think it would be useful to address this concern with coaches and site-based LASW facilitators so that they can inform teachers about actual time requirements and the availability of time within the school day to deal with other professional development and/or instructionally focused issues.

- ***As the district scales-up the reform to include mathematics and other content areas, the BPE-BAC and the district will need to consider how to support teachers' LASW efforts across content areas. Such support will require coaches and school-based LASW facilitators who understand the content, pedagogy and assessment strategies that are embedded in the district's whole-school improvement reform.***

C: Implementation and Use of Performance Assessments

During the 1998-1999 school years, Cohort I and II schools were introduced to the process of collecting performance assessment data that schools and individual teachers could use to measure progress with their instructional focus. The data provided by these formative assessments would enable schools to determine whether and to what extent they were meeting the SMART goals determined at the start of the school year, and they would enable mid-course corrections when it looked as though goals would not be achieved. During the 1998-1999 school year, teachers and principals were informally learning about how to design and implement such assessments and then use the results. The BPE-BAC, excited by the positive results of schools' first steps in performance assessment, planned a more structured implementation of formative assessments in reading and writing during the 1999-2000 school year.

During the summer of 1999, the BPS also determined that it would be advantageous for schools to collect performance assessment data that would inform classroom and schooltime instructional strategies. In short order, all BPS schools were required to assess students' progress in literacy and math three times during the year.[42] Most schools in our sample developed and asked students to respond to three writing prompts by the end of the school year and implemented two or three reading assessments. In addition, most schools did some math assessments. Education Matters' analysis focuses primarily on the literacy assessments because a) schools were most familiar with and consistent in using them, and b) teachers reported that the math assessments were problematic and provided them with little usable data.

Education Matters assumed from the outset that the schoolwide approach to using performance assessment data would be challenging to all schools because it demanded a great deal of time and consideration and would be additional to ongoing school-improvement work. In theory, the BPE-BAC and BPS initiative required teachers and principals to work together to a) design assessments when "ready-made" ones were unavailable, b) implement "off-the-shelf" assessments where appropriate and available, c) collect and analyze data schoolwide, and d) use the data to make instructional decisions. In practice, the BPS required schools only to use reading assessment data to make individual student judgments about retention, promotion and placement in transition services. These judgments and the decisions that followed did not, in reality, require a schoolwide analysis of the data. However, the BPE-BAC stressed the importance of schoolwide assessment data analysis and discussion of the implications for the school's instructional program.

We assumed that this work would be especially challenging to schools whose ILTs and LASW groups were not yet well-established because such schools would not have developed the collegial, collaborative culture needed to increase their focus on instruction. Education Matters hypothesized that schools with higher functioning ILTs and LASW groups would be better positioned to implement and use the results of performance assessments because of their schoolwide capacity to attend to instructional issues. However, we thought it possible that the BPS' approach to implementing performance assessments – if it were sufficiently structured – might enable schools with lower implementing ILT and LASW group schools to implement the performance assessments and use the results. This did not happen. The BPS roll-out of performance assessments was not well-enough organized or supported to enable schools with Type 1 and 2 ILTs and LASW groups to implement this next phase of reform successfully. In fact, the roll-out was frustrating to schools at all levels of implementation. However, as we discuss below, schools with Type 3 and 4 ILT and LASW group implementation had the capacity to use at least some of the formative assessment data they collected to inform their ongoing school improvement efforts.[43]

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[42] See pages 3 and 4 for a description of some of the assessments that were used.

[43] Because this report focuses on taking stock of the impact of implementing the Essentials on the development of a collegial, collaborative culture focused on instruction, we do not detail the BPS approach to implementing performance assessments. We will focus on the BPS implementation strategy and its impact in a future report.

Education Matters' data analysis, conducted in light of these hypotheses, led us to the following conclusions:

- **Schools' capacity to take on the work of performance assessment was strongly related to their type of ILT and LASW group implementation.**

- **Regardless of type of ILT and LASW group implementation, schools faced a number of challenges associated with implementing performance assessments.**

- **Despite all of the challenges associated with implementing performance assessments, most teachers and principals – and especially those in schools with Type 3 and 4 ILTs and LASW groups – reported having learned a great deal about the design and administration of formative assessments and saw their value as integral to improving teaching and learning.**

We turn next to a discussion of these three major findings. For this discussion, we group together schools with Types 1 and 2 ILTs and LASW groups (Type ½), and schools with Types 3 and 4 ILTs and LASW groups (Type 3/4). We do this because there is little variation in the findings with respect to implementation of performance assessments within each of the two groups, but considerable variation between the groups.

Finding 1: Schools' capacity to take on the work of performance assessment was strongly related to their level of ILT and LASW implementation.

Schools with Type ½ ILTs and LASW groups. Four of the five schools included in this group implemented most of the required formative assessments but did not consider the results from a schoolwide perspective.[44] Teachers comments about how they used the results of the assessments varied widely. The next two teacher comments, for example, suggest virtually no use:

> I gave the cold prompt in September, October, whenever it was. I did it in January. And there was no time in between, when I thought about lessons that I could use to actually help them improve. (Teacher N)
>
> We never have any time [to talk about performance assessments]. We never did it, or I have never done it. Let me put it this way: I know how to tabulate the test. I know how to find what are the skills that are [missing], gaps, and I do that. It's not that they [BPS] taught me that. I learned it and I was doing it before this assessment. ...And that helps me find out where my students are. (Teacher GGG)

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[44] The fifth school had difficulty organizing to implement the assessments, but completed some of them.

These teachers might have found the data useful, but what they reported was that they did not take the time or have the occasion on which to use it.

In contrast, the next two teachers made some use of the data and had an inkling of its potential value.

> We were exposed to it just in terms of to be able to reference the productivity of students. They provided us with a list which gave me some insight to understanding why some students were not doing written work and what have you. I did see the results. There were some students that [as a result of seeing the data] I could tell in terms of understanding the prompt, they didn't. But outside of one, all the other ones they seemed to understand the prompt and answered somewhat or very clearly. (Teacher HHH)
>
> Typically, if I didn't do the initial assessment at the beginning of the year, I'd be starting out with everyone on ABCs and the letters and sounds that go with them. However, if there are children in there who are reading a B level book, as far as the guided reading is concerned, there's no need to do that. We can start off with that [level of reading], and we can start off extending the child from where they are. You look at the individual strengths of the child in order to inform your teaching, now. (Teacher B)

And one teacher reported that she developed new understandings about the relationship among a range of reading skills, for example, fluency and comprehension.

> What has surprised me is the real relationship of fluency and [comprehension]. The youngsters that are having difficulty with fluency, their comprehension is also at risk. I said to one of the teachers that the only thing we ever really looked at in a very definite way were comprehension [scores]. We never looked at the other aspects of reading and retelling and sequencing. (Teacher G)

Finally, several teachers in schools with Type ½ ILTs and LASW groups understood performance assessments to be a tool to assist with instruction and, in addition, as the data with which to make decisions about promotion/retention/transition support for students.

> The purpose of it was to see how many of the students had grown this year and how many of them had made the benchmark so that they could handle the work in the next grade and how many of them would need support services – either summer school so they don't lose it over the summer or support services next year. [The purpose is] So that we can organize the kids and be ahead of the game for next year, as well, instead of waiting until September and then taking a month to learn about the kids and delaying the onset of school next year. (Teacher E)

Often, teachers in these schools reported that the assessment data confirmed what they already knew from informal assessments of students' progress. Teachers who were implementing literacy programs said that they already used the ongoing assessments associated with the programs to target instruction. No teacher suggested that their principal or anyone else was encouraging them to use the data. In fact, as the next comment reveals, some teachers were not even aware that the formative assessment strategy was school-based and different than previous BPS requirements for student products.

> We do monthly prompts, we do monthly key questions, personal responses, because we know we are responsible for those products. We had spoken about doing benchmarks, and we didn't do them this year. But we really do want to do benchmarks for our children. I think last year we didn't have to do the three times. [Last year] we had to hand in stuff, periodically, through the facilitator. But this year there's nothing. I mean, who do we hand it to? And it's too bad, because there's no communication from downtown with our school right now. We don't know who we're giving them to, when we're supposed to give them. (Teacher A)

In these Type ½ schools, a grade-level team and/or cluster might, on its own, aggregate the data and consider its instructional implications. However, our analysis reveals no instance of schoolwide consideration of the data by, for example, all grade-level teams or the ILT.[45] In our judgment, this is because such schools did not have in place the organizational and cultural infrastructure provided by the ILT and LASW groups needed for such schoolwide analysis and use of performance assessments. One Director of Instruction noted this absence, reporting, "We have to set up a structure where it makes sense [to look at the data], where we aren't just testing for the sake of testing..." (Administrator H). Yet, we found no evidence in our data that this school or others with Type ½ ILTs and LASW groups developed the structures – either the ILTs and LASW groups or a new structure – within which to make good use of their assessment data. In each of these schools, there were one or two people who generally understood the purpose of the formative assessments and the ways in which the results were to be analyzed and tied to teaching. Often, these were teachers who had gained this knowledge while being trained as LASW facilitators or literacy coordinators. However, given the lack of organizational infrastructure for sharing this knowledge, these individuals had no way to extend their knowledge to others.

Principals of Type ½ schools had little to contribute to the conversation about formative assessment. They could not talk about what they had learned from the assessments because, at the end of the school year, they had not yet studied the data. Principals' comments suggest the minimal role they played in leading this aspect of whole-school improvement, and how little responsibility they assumed for implementation.

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[45] One school reported that it was aggregating the year's data and would make it available to teachers at the end of the year. The data, in this way, would provide a summary of progress for each class.

> For the writing there are writing prompts – we hadn't standardized that piece. Where are these prompts coming from? We were looking at BPS task descriptions as the measurement. The question of whether we can go with a schoolwide prompt – we're not there. We're back to talking about that. ...The writing piece was more personal by grade level and what [teachers] chose. They had to run the prompts by me, because I realized that they needed a lot of guidance. I became sort of the final arbiter of some of these things. I guess maybe that is my role as educational leader: to understand what might make a good writing prompt. [Use of the data] varied from team to team, and that's one of the things that [the coach] and I are talking about for next year. Looking at student work is probably our weakest area. Some teams have the wherewithal themselves to come up with some instructional changes. ...Some struggled more just in using the rubric and in coming to consensus on the quality of the work. And so people are in all different stages on this, just looking at the writing piece. (Administrator B)

This principal conveyed no sense of urgency with respect to implementing the reform and never suggested a strategy for helping teachers move forward with their knowledge and skill concerning the use of performance assessment data.

The next principal reported calmly in the middle of May, 2000, that she and her teachers were beginning to take a "cursory" look at the formative assessment data.

> We were able to do kindergarten through fifth grade, three tests. We've met with the grade level teams. We're just touching on it really, but I've met with the grade level teams. And our coach has met with them to look at the results, to get trends. We've looked at results, also, of individual students. ... We're just scratching the surface on that. I don't think a lot of people understand how in-depth that's got to be. I've done a cursory look at the data, but you need to take a hard look at it to see what trends are. [As far as schoolwide sharing of assessment data] formally, probably not, although that's one of the things we're working on. ... I can't say we have. (Administrator A)

Neither one of these principals, nor some of the others in this Type ½ group, had successfully led the development of ILTs or LASW groups at their schools. None suggested a workable strategy for improving the use of performance assessment data in the coming school year. The best that several offered was the hope that use would improve.

Two of the principals in our sample of Type ½ schools were more sophisticated about the potential value of performance assessments and tried to engender more data use by their teachers. They took a stronger role in implementing the assessments and encouraging their use. However, neither principal was able to accomplish her goals due to the absence, in our view, of a strong ILT and LASW infrastructure. The weak infrastructure arose in one school from considerable teacher resistance to working with the principal. Teachers, in fact, supported the reform; they objected to the principal's leadership style. In the other school, a strong cadre of teachers remained resistant to the entire reform agenda. The principal tried all year to engage ILT members and/or a sub-committee of the ILT in analyzing the aggregated assessment data. She used the ILT as a vehicle for reminding teachers that performance assessment data would help them set SMART goals and guide instruction. However, at the end of the year, she reported that neither the sub-committee nor the ILT had yet conducted such an analysis. The principal hoped that an ILT retreat over the summer would focus members' attention on the use of performance data and engage the interest of all ILT members.

The absence of a schoolwide collegial culture that focused on instruction left Type ½ schools without the capacity to take stock of their progress three times during the school year in order to make needed instructional changes. Not only were teachers and principals without the functioning organizational structures – the LASW groups, for example, that could score and consider the results of grade level performance assessments – they also lacked the practical understanding of how these data might be used to improve instruction. They had not yet experienced the positive impact of professional development associated with high functioning LASW groups, nor the value of a high functioning ILT. As a result, (and given the district's decision to use the performance assessments to make decisions about promotion, retention, and transition services) for many teachers in these Type ½ schools, performance assessments were seen as just one more thing that teachers had to do and one more hurdle that students had to jump.

Schools with Type 3/4 ILTs and LASW groups. Teachers and principals in schools with Type 3/4 ILTs and LASW groups talked at length about the strengths of the performance assessments and their implications for instruction.[46] Their comments suggested that they considered performance assessment data, for the most part, as a kind of student work which they examined with some of the same lenses they brought to their regular LASW sessions. Teachers and principals knew that the purpose of examining the assessment data was to inform their instruction. They provided many examples of schoolwide as well as individual and/or grade-level attention to the formative assessment data. Although teachers and principals in these schools also lamented the poor quality of the math assessments, principal leadership enabled them to use and learn from some of the results. Notably, principals in these schools took a considerably greater role in data analysis and its implications for use than did their colleagues in Type ½ schools. The findings for Type 3/4 schools, in fact, stand in contrast to those described for schools with Type ½ ILTs and LASW groups. We report first teachers' comments about the formative assessments and their use. Then we turn to principals' views.

Teachers in Type 3/4 schools talked about using the assessments at multiple levels: a) as individual classroom teachers, b) in grade-level or cluster meetings, and c) in whole school discussions. Their comments reveal what they learned and how that learning focused their practice and that of their teacher colleagues.

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[46] The teachers quoted on page 23 indicate the ways in which the ILTs were involved in examining work produced for the performance assessments.

The majority of the class went up a level, some actually two [on the mid-year assessment], and it helped me to decide what I needed [to teach] for the rest of the year. For example, if it were punctuation, which seemed to be missing from all of the papers, [I would] make another small group with a few students that still aren't making progress. What's needed to help them make progress? So it's been really helpful that way. And, with the other teachers, to compare classes, and see if we can combine kids together to do something to help those Level 1 students. So it's been good. I do enjoy that part of it. It's time consuming. It takes a little bit of time out of the teaching to actually give those tests three times a year, but they are helpful. (Teacher OO)

[After seeing the mid-year assessments] what we did was decide, on some children, that we would see three times a week and some that we were going to see every day of the week, because these were the kids that maybe progressed a little bit, but not enough. ...So we said, “Okay, we need to change the frequency that we see them.” Then, we have two other children that are really above grade level, in this room, and two in another room, so now they get together, and we see them as a group. Also, now if [for example] they have trouble with short vowel sounds, or long vowels, or whatever, we'll try to pick books that have that [skill in them]. ...So, you find out a weakness within a certain group of kids and say, “Okay, these are the kids we're going to get these books for the short vowel sound. And then there's an assignment [for them] to do afterwards. (Teacher W)

When I looked at the assessment, I did see a lot of growth. By the time that mid-year had come, I had really honed down what I was requiring and what I was looking for in each piece [of writing]. We did a lot of lead-ins, we did a lot on sequence and conclusions, the two hardest parts for them. I saw a lot of growth. At first I looked at it and I said, “Ugh.” But then, when I looked back at what they had begun with, I was pleasantly surprised in that I did see a lot of growth. I'm pleased with it. ...And we did that in the whole grade. We taught all our children. It was neat. (Teacher Z)

We realize [from the assessments that] the children have a lot of difficulty with critical thinking skills. And so what we have each week is what we call a math challenge. Where [another teacher] or I come up with a math challenge, word problem that the kids have to solve. It's usually a type of problem that they may see on the Stanford 9 or the MCAS. ...When we first started this, we actually had kids in tears. Our brightest kids. It was really something to see. They couldn't do it. It was just too difficult. Whereas now they know on Fridays we have our math challenge and they're ready. ... At the beginning of the year it was intimidating to them to get this challenge. And now they actually are working really, really hard to solve them. (Teacher Y)

> Looking at the first assessment, you have a feeling of where they are and what you need to emphasize for the next writing prompt or to teach them because they obviously didn't get it. Then you look at the second one and then you say, "Oh my gosh. I thought I went over this over and over and over and they still didn't get it." That's one thing [we learn]. And then another thing, they get better maybe at introductions and conclusions, but now they are not giving a counter-argument. They forgot. They put an emphasis on one part and they don't pay attention to the other parts of the essay. [Laughter] So, you have to work again on the parts that they didn't put any emphasis on and in deeper ways. (Teacher AAA)

> We have done two writing prompts; one was the Literacy Collaborative writing prompt, and the other is our schoolwide writing prompt, and we sat down, and we scored them. We do that [scoring of the writing prompts] at our whole school meetings. We had teams of people in each grade level, and they would go through the rubrics [to insure reliability in scoring]. We each got our scores for the individual [students], and then we wrote a prescription, not individually, but class wise, from the evidence that we saw in our class. What was the next thing we thought we needed to address? Was it paragraphing? Was it conclusions? Was it basic punctuation? Was it details? Was it opening topic sentences? Those types of things, and then we were supposed to use that [prescription] as the starting point for instruction. (Teacher X)

A few teachers reported using the assessment data with their students.

> I use the results to show the kids, to show them the progress that they're making so that they don't get frustrated. I think it helps them keep going. So that's another way that I use it. For me, obviously, it instructs my teaching because then when I take my reading groups I know: they're still having trouble with comprehension; I still have to keep working on comprehension with this group. Or, they're still having trouble decoding: I need to keep doing this. So that's how I use it also. (Teacher QQ)

> I would read some of them [the essays] aloud. I would take three or four and interweave all of them and put them on an overhead and discuss each part. I might give them the paper and take time to work on the conclusions. "You work on the conclusions." And then next week everybody talks about the part that they worked on [to improve.] So those are different strategies that I have used. So, I hope that by the third or the fourth time that they get all the parts that make up persuasive essays. (Teacher AAA)

As a result of examining the assessment data, some teachers, in collaboration with their principals, realized that they would benefit from professional development on specific aspects of instruction.

> I was surprised that the results of the "number sense" portion of the test from September to January [in my class] weren't very good. And when we assessed the whole school we found that the whole school had problems in the area of number sense. We have made a real concerted effort to try to work on that area. And by mid-year, the whole school had covered number sense and we still found that area to be a problem. So, since then, we've had consultants come in and work with us on how to teach the skill more effectively. And we have all vowed to try to use more manipulatives. So we've definitely been working more in that area.
> (Teacher PP)

Looking at the assessments was not always pleasant. Often, the data revealed that teachers' hard work had not led to expected gains in student achievement. Conversations about "next steps," on occasion might uncover fundamental disagreements about pedagogy. For example, teachers in one school reported disagreement about how to teach writing in grades K-2. Some felt that the students had to learn early to respond to the district's Key Questions; others believed that such a writing focus would prevent children from learning to express themselves in writing. Having aired these disagreements, teachers and the principal had to find a way to resolve them with the goal of improving students' writing. Nonetheless, the fact that teachers were airing their differences with the goal of improving the school's writing program revealed a) the existence of a collaborative culture that focused on instruction, and b) the value of seriously dealing with performance assessment data.

While implementing the performance assessments and using the results may not have been easy for teachers, their comments reveal that they gained considerably from the hard work. They were able to elaborate what they learned from the assessments and how they used that information to inform next steps in instruction. These teachers would not argue that they had mastered either the implementation or use of the data. However, they made significant strides in this direction and, as a result, considered the work to be worthwhile even if it was also challenging.

Principals of schools with Type 3/4 ILTs and LASW groups, like their teachers, were specific in their discussion of what they learned from the performance assessments. These principals identified ways in which they used the assessments – whether they were or were not of high quality – to push the agenda of improving teaching and learning. Their comments revealed principals' knowledge of the details of the instructional programs in their schools, and clarity about their roles as leaders of that program. These principals seemed always to be thinking of what had to happen next to further improve teaching and learning.

Taking this perspective often gave principals the task of confronting assessment data that indicated their schools were not making sufficient progress without losing heart and/or blaming the teachers or the students. They had to accept the data, insist that teachers and students could do better, and then lead teachers to a set of next steps that might make a difference. Principals' comments revealed that they understood the implications of the data and the importance of framing teachers' responses to them.

> When we saw how a whole grade was doing, pick third grade, for example, we asked, "OK, how can we move it? What can we do for the children when they're not moving?" That was with the first assessment, actually. We put [things in] place based specifically on literacy and the math, as well. Based specifically on what we were seeing. With the second assessment now, after we have put all these resources in place, what are we seeing? If this is our goal [pointing to a goal], and this is how many kids still are performing at Level 1, I asked them the question: "You have so many months ahead of you." Because the second assessment was at the end of January. I asked them, "If you want that child to learn something, something real, what would that something be? What would you concentrate on? Because you really know what that child who is in grade three really needs to know and still has not learned. If you really want that child to learn something, what would that be?" And I asked them actually to put it in writing. (Administrator E)

> The goal was that everyone would be at a Level 3 [in writing] at the end of the year because the definition of a 3 is "meets end of year expectations." And students aren't there. And while, on the one hand, of course it's a disappointment that their writing hasn't improved enough, at the same time it's a good sign that people feel safe enough to turn in scores where their students didn't meet the expectations and [that] we're scoring in an honest way, in a high-standards way. And what the [coach] and I did was enter the data so you can see your whole class on one page. Then, we would do a class average. And we'd look and say, "Well, in 2nd grade almost everyone got a 0 for setting. They didn't include settings in their stories," so that will be our instructional focus and how can we teach that? Then the whole group [of teachers] would plan ways of teaching. And we'd do little mini performance-based assessments throughout, just to focus on that one [skill of setting]. (Administrator K)

Even when principals saw progress, they had to be willing and able to convince their teachers that they had more work to do if students were to achieve at high standards. For example, the principal who made the next comment understood that her teachers had succeeded in getting young students to write more and to enjoy their writing. Now, she realized, she had to encourage teachers to maintain students' enthusiasm for writing while teaching them to express themselves more succinctly.

> I think we really have improved in writing as a result of doing that [assessment], and really looking at what children can and cannot do around writing. We see kids writing more, filling up pages. I think everybody is excited about writing, and you see that. Now, how do you take that, without discouraging children, and give them some skills so that they don't have to write six pages [to say something that could be said in far fewer pages]. (Administrator I)

And, in some schools, principals had to convince teachers that implementing the assessments was important and not merely a matter of complying with BPS and/or BPE-BAC policy.

> Getting everyone on the same page [has been a challenge]. Not necessarily in using the assessments, but understanding **why** we need to use it. I'm a why person. If I understand why, even if I might not agree, I will do it. That has been the challenge. Teachers would ask you, "OK, why do we need to do it? Because everybody else is doing it?" Is that what Boston really wants? So it's making them understand why we are doing what we're doing. What the purpose is. I mean, if we continue doing what we have been doing up to now, will that move all the students? **All.** That's the key. That's what I keep telling them. It's all. Not anymore just the ones that can be moved, the ones that even if they don't have a teacher in front of them they're going to learn. Or the ones that if we give them a push are going to learn. It's all of them. It's the ones that we even have and we notice they're struggling. How can we move that struggler a little bit. So that has been the struggle throughout the year. I can see that many of them are now beginning to see that's why we need to do it. Because actually it's helping them as a teacher to understand better that child that is struggling, understand the strengths of the child so they can use those strengths to start building up the weaknesses. (Administrator E)

Principals' comments demonstrate that they took an active role in pushing the instructional agenda even when teachers resisted. They described being engaged in significant discussions of curriculum and instruction with their teachers, but then making the hard leadership decisions that would enable them to learn about the impact of their teaching. One principal reviewed her thinking about such a decision with respect to the math curriculum and associated assessments.

> There's been a lot of resistance about the math assessment. The middle level grades, 4th and 5th, in particular, have been very adamant that they can't and they shouldn't have to do so many chapters, that it was too hard, whatever. And I've kind of held the line here and said, "We're going to do it this way this year. And I know you have problems and concerns about it, but I'm not going to really listen to you too much. I heard you, but I think that we need to get baseline data. We need to try this and we see exactly where the kids are, see them make progress, see how well they know the math, use the support of pre-testing and then post-testing them and then the chapter tests, and the cumulative tests. And then seeing if it's made any difference at the end of the year. And if we haven't made any difference then we need to have another approach and we'd better find one." (Administrator H)

This principal, and many of her colleagues in schools with Type 3/4 ILTs and LASW groups, seemed to understand that the work in which they and their teachers were engaged involved continuous development and progress. This knowledge enabled them to make decisions and work with teachers in ways that helped the school build on its growing sophistication with respect to teaching and learning. To demonstrate this perspective, we review Principal H's discussion of how she understood her teachers' work with improving writing. She pointed out that teachers had to understand and accept the school's rubrics for assessing student work before they could effectively use the rubrics. Without being able to use the rubric with understanding, teachers would not be able to learn lessons from the results of their writing assessments.

> For us, last year [1998-1999] was very crucial in that we defined different rubrics, we developed our own rubrics, and part of the goal last year was to make sure that people understood the rubric and really worked at implementing the rubric, when it was possible, across the board. And that system works. (Administrator H)

With the rubrics internalized, teachers were able to consider addressing an instructional focus – persuasive writing – and consider how the rubric would give them feedback on their progress:

> What people have been able to see through their group sessions and their benchmarking is what we need are larger numbers [higher rubric scores]. How we see growth in kids, particularly in the grades where they change from narrative to [persuasive]. So 5th graders, at the beginning of the year, have to write a persuasive essay. They've never taken persuasive essays, so they don't really know what a persuasive essay is. So, obviously, as we teach persuasive essay components then, you're going to see a great a great deal of growth. So we did see it, and in [looking at] the benchmark setting, there was a big deal of growth. (Administrator H)

Then, with a) agreement about the rubrics, b) the focus on persuasive writing, and c) the benchmark data, teachers were able to consider where to place their next instructional emphasis:

> And in the analysis, what we found was that obviously for second language learners the issue is grammar, the issue is how to write well, how to connect sentences, how to make paragraphs, stick to the topic and develop thought and that's all very hard work. The thing that you learn is that the writing piece is all very hard work, that it doesn't come easy. It's really a struggle, many times, to get kids to learn how to write well. (Administrator H)

Finally, these data led the principal to realize that some of her teachers needed professional development in teaching writing.

> And what we know is that we have teachers who are good teachers in writing, and we have teachers who don't have a clue: don't know how to teach writing well, and do try their best, but you're not going to learn through that teacher. For me, the sense is that we still have a long way to go in training teachers how to become writing teachers. (Administrator H)

One can imagine that, subsequent to such professional development, teachers and the principal would determine, once again, whether their instruction is leading to higher rubric scores for their students.

Teachers and principals in schools with Type 3/4 ILTs and LASW groups seem to have developed a) a language for talking about instructional improvement in their own classrooms and in the school as a whole, and b) organizational structures in which such conversations can take place. Their voices reveal how much of teaching practice has been made public by examination of the assessment data. Principals' voices reveal the significant role that they have taken in forwarding the conversation around instruction.

Although we cannot argue that the presence of strong ILTs and LASW groups *caused* the stronger implementation of performance assessments, we can say with assurance that only those schools with strong ILTs and LASW groups were able to take strong first-steps in implementing this component of the Essentials. These structures provided a venue in which teachers and principals came together to discuss teaching and learning. Without them, schools had no forum in which to have the discussions; no mechanisms with which to connect within their grade and content areas or across grades and content areas.

Finding 2: Regardless of Type of ILTs and LASW groups, schools faced a number of challenges associated with implementing performance assessments. To begin with, teachers needed some knowledge and skill with the individual reading assessments, in particular, in order to implement them properly. However, some schools did not have teachers who were trained in the required reading assessments. And, some of the same schools did not receive the correct forms of the reading assessment from the BPS. This led to two significant problems. First, teachers found themselves spending considerable time figuring out how to do the assessments properly. Second, because they had the wrong form of the assessment for the first implementation, they could not readily compare fall and winter scores. As a result, teachers and principals who were committed to implementing the assessments were frustrated by the BPS' inability to provide them with the correct tests and the appropriate professional development.

Teachers and principals also struggled with the development and implementation of writing prompts.

> It's always a challenge to develop a prompt that will sort of lead kids to produce a piece of writing in a certain way. For example, we asked kids to talk about a day that they wish they could change, and logically, we hoped that they would talk about the day and then how they would change it. Well, a lot of kids just didn't give us enough detail on what happened to begin with. They talked about how they would like it to be. I guess the challenge for us is to give enough structure, but not give too much structure, in developing the writing prompts. And I think that, again, that was the surprise this time, that we really didn't give enough structure, so that the levels of work were sort of all over the place. (Teacher NN)

> We defined the writing prompt. The idea of a cold prompt was nice, it was based on the MCAS, and that was very realistic and clear. But we understand now how to make it clearer and fine-tune it. And also we now understand that it has to change somewhat. That was a hard issue for discussion because in September it was a cold prompt, but when you give the same prompt in mid-year, it is not really a cold prompt. [However], if you change the prompt, then you're not really comparing. So we had a conversation going on where some of the staff felt that you change the prompt and some felt, well, you're comparing apples and oranges. We did stay with the same prompt this year, (Teacher N)

Many were not sure whether they should use exactly the same prompt three times during the year or whether they had to assess the students on the same writing genre, for example, personal narrative or persuasive essay, three times during the year. If they varied the prompt, teachers realized that some prompts were better than others and that students scores might be low because the prompt was weak. On the other hand, if they used the same prompt, they worried about students being bored with the topic. Still other questions arose about whether to use the same prompt schoolwide – across the grades – or whether to develop different prompts by grade level. Too often, few people at the schools shared a common set of expectations about how to go about designing and implementing these important assessments.

Implementing math performance assessments raised yet other problems. The district provided little in the way of guidance for these assessments and teachers and principals knew that the district had asked for assessments prior to developing its plans for the math program implementation itself. When district-developed tasks appeared at the schools, almost everyone agreed that they were seriously flawed. Some schools attempted to develop their own tasks or figure out ways to use traditional tests to measure student growth in mathematics. But the content area presented them with issues that were more complex than those connected to literacy. For example, a math test at the start of the year might focus on adding and subtracting fractions or word problems involving ratio and proportion, content that the students should have mastered by the end of the previous grade. A mid-year assessment might focus on topics such as probability and geometry. As a result of what was described as the "topical" nature of mathematics, teachers reported that they could not judge student growth on a continuum as they could reading and writing (where students should show growth in the same set of skills). Teachers and administrators wished for more guidance and expertise from the district with respect to assessing students' progress in mathematics.

> We don't have a good assessment for math. I don't even think that the city has it. So we are struggling: what would be the best assessment that can give the most information? Like [we have] in a guided reading lesson. You want to do a guided math lesson. I [want to be able to] specifically say, "OK, this child knows how to carry two numbers, but when he gets to the three digits he doesn't carry. What's the problem? Does the child really understand the carrying process or just learn it [by rote]? Or does the child really have a good understanding of what number sense is?" That's what I'm saying. We're not doing that well in math

> yet. And many of us think it's because we might not have the right tool to assess the children yet. So that's the part that we're struggling with. And I wish that I could find a very good tool for us in that. ...I wish there would be some kind of running record for math, or miscue analysis for math that we can look at so we can start using it. (Administrator E)

One of the major challenges to implementing and using performance assessment data came from the time demands of this work. Almost everyone reported that implementing, scoring and recording the data took a great deal of time and often limited the time left available for examining the data and considering how to use it for instructional improvement. Many teachers talked about how long it took to score and use the writing assessment data. However, even more talked about the time demands of the individual reading assessments.

> I think the most challenging thing is finding the time to really look at the year's results closely. I just completed a case study on one student and I used all of that data from the reading assessment. And I charted it and I analyzed it and I felt like I really knew this kid and I knew what he needed. But it's hard to find the time to do it for every single one of your students. It would be nice if we had professional development time [for this]. Hopefully, we're looking into that next year, where our looking at student work time is really teachers just sitting down and being able to analyze their own data, not have to look at, I mean yes have some, like, we thought of alternating, like one meeting be looking at whole school work but then the other meeting, you know, just like two or three teachers sitting down and looking at their own students' performance but being able to talk to a few other people. (Teacher QQ)
>
> The third grade was required to administer the Developmental Reading Assessment, an individually administered test that focuses on comprehension. There's also a fluency piece. First of all, I like the assessment. Because it is individually administered I get to talk to the kids about reading. I get to talk to them about things that an ordinary reading test would not test for such as their reading habits: whether or not they like to read, what books do they read; when do they read; what would they like to see in our classroom library. And I also get to do a fluency check. And so you get to hear the child read; you get to get some insight on their comprehension when they read independently. I thought it was a pretty comprehensive kind of reading test. The flip side is because it's administered individually and it takes about a half hour per child, it takes a long time to administer the test to a whole class. ... [and] you just don't have the time to reflect on what this all means. And if you don't do the reflection then, to be honest, the chances of picking up your assessment and going back over it a week or so later are small. (Teacher CC)
>
> I think that we did use [the assessment data] for writing. For reading the test could have been used in much richer ways than we used it. The questions

> could've been analyzed in terms of inference or detail. [But] I didn't really feel like I could ask teachers to do that. I had made a grid and I was going to do it, but I didn't....So, sometimes we spend so much time entering the data and then teachers look at the sheet that we print out so quickly. It's like, "Could you look a little bit longer...?" So sometimes I wonder if we should look at the data a bit more slowly. (Administrator K)

Teachers and administrators raise two different points with respect to the time demands of the performance assessments. The first point concerns the amount of time actually spent in implementing the assessments and, for the most part, it is elementary teachers who spoke to the time demands of administering individual assessments (even though they value the information the assessments provide). The second point concerns the amount of time and expertise required to put the data into usable forms and formats so that it can be analyzed and used by individual teachers, grade teams and/or clusters, and the ILT. On this second point, we know that the BPE has been pilot testing a data management software system developed to facilitate the input and use of the assessment data.

Finally, although only a few teachers or principals raised the point, our experience suggests that it is important to note that some educators are not sure about which next steps to take after they have considered the performance assessment data. When they do not know what to do, the data have far less of an impact.

> I don't think it has yet, as much as I would like impact what we do. I think it gave us some good information, but we're still not quite clear on what to do with all that. How do you take these scores-- I mean you've got to see growth, and I think that's very easy to celebrate. But when you didn't see growth, I'm not quite sure we were clear on what do we do with this group or that child, other than providing them with more of the same, and I don't think we're yet looking at OK, maybe this child needs a different technique, or maybe that. I think we're still, we'll give him a tutor. I think there's more conversations we need to have around that. So I think what we did with it was look at growth, and celebrate that growth, and felt good about that, but I'm not quite sure on the other end of that how much we've really given it some real thought about OK, what about this group that's not growing? And how do I need to change my teachers on that? (Administrator I)

This administrator is correct in pointing out that even when schools take the time to carefully analyze the data, and even when teachers want to improve their instruction, what to do next will not always be self-evident. Teachers and administrators who find themselves in such situations need to be reminded of the resources that might assist them in developing their next instructional steps. Coaches, for example, might be able to lead teachers and principals in discussions about the implications of the data. They might be able to direct teachers to other schools that have already developed strategies to deal with the instructional issues raised by the data. And, coaches might be able to design specific professional development sessions relevant to teachers' needs.

Finding 3: Despite all of the challenges associated with performance assessments, many teachers and principals – especially, but not only, those in schools with Level 3/4 ILTs and LASW groups – reported having learned a great deal about the design and administration of performance assessments from this first implementation and saw its value as part of the effort to improve teaching and learning. For example, many teachers and principals became more sophisticated about the kinds of information they could get from different assessments and learned that the value of that information often varied with the quality of the assessment.

> Every time we do it, we get better at it, or we've actually changed [an assessment]. We picked certain benchmark books for each level, that we keep separate, so the kids do a cold read [for the assessment]. And this year we've already changed one of the books, because we said this really isn't showing us what we need to know. We keep fine tuning that. I think it's worked well. (Teacher W)

> Well, we learned two things. We learned one that it's important to make sure that you're giving the correct form of the assessment! [When] we tried to connect the September scores with the January scores – which really looked inflated – we realized that although they appear to be the same test, one was a little easier than the other. So we learned that you have to look at what tests you're giving. (Administrator I)

Teachers learned that the design of an assessment can stand in the way of students demonstrating what they have learned.

> The math facilitator developed a test, and ...I learned that there were a lot of things that [confused] the kids. Example: the way it was set up on the page. I redid some things afterwards to see if they knew it, and they did. But the way it was presented to them made a big difference. One of the directions was to put a greater or less than or equal sign in the box. I cannot tell you how many children put those signs in that specific directions box, as opposed to going through each in the problems [and putting it there]. So that made it hard, because they didn't understand the directions, because it wasn't something that they were used to. (Teacher UU)

They also learned that they could become more skillful in developing assessments by going through the process, as this teacher notes.

> We've looked at several different writing prompts and I think we're spending our time, as an elementary team, getting familiar with them. We've used three different writing rubrics this year. And that takes getting familiar with it and

> arguing it through and trying to get us back [together] so that we're sort of in agreement on what level this piece of work is, that we kind of all agree about common grading. It's been somewhat confusing because we've been going through [prompts and rubrics] and examining them, which is a useful thing to do. It's not a waste of time. (Teacher AA)

Teachers and principals learned about the relative value of different kinds of assessment data and the importance of using such data for students who are higher achieving as well as those who are behind.

> I think the other thing we learned was that the SRI doesn't really give us a lot of information for instruction. It gives you a lexile score, but it doesn't really help you as well as the DRA or the running records in terms of what are some of the skills that the students are lacking. Both the running records and the DRA are very time consuming to administer because they're individual. How do you balance that? What we tried to do is give the DRA to those students who did not score well on the SRI, but in hindsight we may want to give everybody the DRA because even those students who are scoring well, you still want to gain information about what they do well and what they don't, so that you can move them forward. I think we learned that. (Administrator I)

When performance assessment data were shared **schoolwide** at the middle school level, social studies and science teachers, for example, had opportunities to learn from the findings and consider how they could improve students' literacy skill.

> What the data did for me, actually, is it really let me know exactly where the students stood with being able to respond to certain types of questions. [I learned that] just because a student receive a satisfactory score in English language arts that doesn't mean that he might be able to respond as well to a science prompt. What that did say to me is that if they are capable of scoring well on an English language arts prompt then they should be almost equally capable of responding to a science prompt. If they don't, then there may be an issue with their vocabulary. Or it may be an issue with their not realizing that I expect them to carry over the skills they've learned in English language arts and apply them in science. So my just being aware of what the English language arts teachers are doing in their classrooms by way of being brought in on the testing let me know exactly, in a nut shell, the type of writing that they were expected to do in English language arts. (Teacher I)

Finally, teachers and principals learned more about the meaning of achievement levels in a standards-based system. They began, in some schools, to place more attention on the extent to which students' progress was leading them toward meeting the standard. As the next two comments suggest, assessment data enabled a) teachers to make the meaning of standards clear to parents, and b) principals to stress the importance of teachers keeping the standards in mind as their goals for student achievement.

> I find it very helpful to go over the assessments. I've invited all of my parents to come and sit with me and see the assessments of their children. I think it helps the parents understand that whole concept of the standards better, that yes, this is what the child has to do, and we can see right now that they can do this and they can do that and we need to work together to help this, and we need to help that, and we need to help the other thing. I think it's very enlightening for parents....But they're getting the revelation now, with the standards, that yes, in fact, you have to reach a certain level. Because the kid's a nice kid and works really hard, that's not measured against a standard. And that's very hard for teachers, too. Because they'll bring something to looking at student work and say, "But you don't understand, this is really good for this kid." We have to say, "Yeah, we do understand. But it still isn't the standard." And that's hard. (Teacher H)

> I posed the question to them again and said OK, "Are we a standards based district? What does that mean? Should we just assess the child for the purpose of knowing where the child is now? And what to do next? That's good," I said, "but, isn't didn't we start with the baseline data for the whole year [in light of the standards]? How can we compare that data with the data that just I've given you?" And they said, "Yeah, that's right." So they understood that if we're talking "standards-based," we need to assist the students based on the standard for the grade and how well they are working towards the standard. And then after teachers see how they're doing [against the standard], then they will have to go back and assess them about where are they right now so they can know what is to do next." (Administrator E)

It is encouraging that many teachers and principals learned important, positive lessons from the first, somewhat rough implementation of performance standards. They ended the 1999-2000 school year somewhat frustrated by the work with assessments, but much clearer about their potential benefits. Most of the teachers and principals who learned from the assessments worked in schools with Type 3/4 ILTs and LASW groups. A few worked in schools with less well-developed ILTs and LASW groups. It is discouraging, however, to note that most teachers in the schools with less well-developed ILTs and LASW groups had little opportunity to learn from implementation of the performance assessments.

Summary and Conclusions of Part C: Performance Assessments. Education Matters' analysis of the implementation of performance assessments confirms the hypothesis that this component of reform would be better implemented in schools with more fully developed ILTs and LASW groups. Our analysis reveals dramatic differences in principals' and teachers' understanding and use of performance assessment data depending on whether they work in schools with Type ½ or Type 3/4 ILTs and LASW groups. Schools' capacity to take on the work of performance assessment was strongly related to their level of ILT and LASW implementation.

- ***Schools with Type 1 and Type 2 ILTs and LASW groups were least able to manage the implementation, recording and use of these data.*** Teachers and some principals in these schools did not understand the district's requirements for performance assessments. Writing assessments might be given, for example, but not scored for several months. Alternatively, if the assessments were scored, the scores and their meanings were not considered by the ILTs or LASW groups. Occasionally, individual teachers would look at their students scores in order to make adjustments in teaching. But, none of these schools systematically analyzed and/or used the assessment data on a grade-level, cluster or schoolwide basis. With one exception, principals of these schools took no steps to organize for schoolwide use of the data.

- ***Schools with Type 3 and Type 4 ILTs and LASW groups were far more able to implement the assessments and consider the meaning of the results.*** While teachers in Type 3 and 4 schools might struggle to develop a writing prompt or agree on a rubric, for the most part, they found the work rewarding and important for the school as a whole. Teachers in these schools could detail the ways in which they used the performance assessment information and how it highlighted the need to think more creatively about helping children who were not learning with extant strategies. In a few schools, teachers and principals planned teacher professional development in light of the assessment data. With only one exception, principals (or another administrator) took a substantial role in implementation and use of the assessment data. Certainly, the quality of use varied from school to school and within schools. Yet, all of these schools found beneficial ways in which to use the assessment data to address issues of teaching and learning.

- ***A Type 3 or 4 well-functioning ILT seemed essential for enabling a school to consider, schoolwide, the results of the performance assessments.*** Without the ILT, there was no organizational structure in which such discussions could take place. With the ILT, teachers reported that they had a forum in which to communicate about the data.

- ***Type 3 or 4 well-functioning LASW groups provided teachers with good experience examining student work and linking it to instruction. This experience served them well when they applied it to work produced for the performance assessment.***

- ***All schools struggled with a set of challenges associated with implementing the performance assessments.*** These included:
    - lack of familiarity with some of the assessments required by the BPS and the absence of professional development on how to appropriately administer them,
    - receipt and, therefore, administration of incorrect forms of the assessments resulting in data that could not be compared over time,
    - confusion about how to develop and use writing prompts,

  - math assessments that were not linked to the curriculum used at the schools, and, therefore, did not enable teachers to measure growth over time, and
  - the large amount of time required to implement all of the assessments and the individual reading assessments in particular.

- ***Implementing performance assessments for the first time enabled many teachers and principals learn about a) the complexity of assessing student learning, b) the importance of selecting or designing a valid assessment and using it expertly, and c) the value of having such data when it accurately reflects student knowledge and skill.***

III. TEACHER LEADERSHIP

The components of whole-school improvement detailed in the preceding section are practices aimed at breaking down the traditional isolation of teachers within schools and uniting school staffs around instructional goals via collaborative work. We have stressed the role of the principal in enabling these changes to occur. However, in addition, for these changes to occur, teachers must take on leadership roles; teachers as leaders, ultimately must take charge of the shift away from the traditional model of teachers working on their own in isolated classrooms towards a model of collaborative work and shared, high expectations. These teacher leaders may be the first to share their students' work among colleagues and open the doors of their classrooms for peer observation. They model "best practices" and lead efforts to develop and implement common curricula and assessments. Eventually, they will lead both ILTs and LASW groups. They are the ones who develop content area expertise and support their colleagues to develop new knowledge and skills. And, they are the ones who seek input from their colleagues in order to contribute to decisions that affect the whole school via the ILT. In short, implementing the Essentials of Whole-School Change to the point that they are self-sustaining demands strong and effective teacher leaders.

Because increased teacher leadership and progress with the Essentials are intertwined in the theory of reform that guides Boston's work, we expected that schools that were further along with implementing their ILTs and LASW groups would have stronger and more effective teacher leadership. For example, in schools that had strong ILTs in which teachers had a real voice in decision-making, we expected teachers to feel a stronger sense of ownership with respect to the implementation of their decisions. We expected teachers in such schools to have greater depth of understanding regarding the purposes of the various components of the reform work, such as LASW. In turn, we expected to see teacher collaboration that focused on instructional improvement in such schools.

To test these assumptions, we examined the status of teacher leadership in light of the level of implementation of the ILTs and LASW groups. We found that where these structures were better established, leadership was distributed among more teachers and teachers reported feeling more efficacious in their leadership work. In contrast, in schools where ILTs and LASW groups were weak, we found that teachers were working in a more traditional, isolated mode, and teacher leadership was not supported by either colleagues or administrators.[47] Absent such organizational structures, there were few if any arenas in which teachers at these schools could take on new leadership responsibilities and be supported enough to succeed.[48] Because teachers in Type 3 and 4 schools are more engaged in leadership work, most of the voices presented in this section of the report come from teachers and administrators who are working in schools with higher functioning ILTs and/or LASW groups.

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[47] This is not to say that these schools did not have teachers who took on leadership responsibilities, it is only to say that those in leadership positions did not benefit from a supportive, collegial school culture.

[48] It may be that Type 1, and some Type 2, schools' faculties do not include enough teachers who have the capacity and desire to take on leadership roles. We do not have the data with which to test such a hypothesis.

We focus this section of the report somewhat differently than previous sections. Rather than delineate the ways in which teachers are assuming leadership in schools with Type 1-4 ILTs and LASW groups, this section focuses on the common conditions and challenges that teacher leaders face even in schools with Type 3 and 4 ILTs and LASW groups. We take this stance because we want to draw attention to the needs of teacher leaders in those schools that have come farthest with implementing the reform. The BPE-BAC will need to determine how to support these teacher leaders if these schools are to move even further with implementing Boston's whole-school improvement agenda.

We begin by reviewing why teacher leadership matters in the current Boston context. We then turn to a discussion of what teachers need to know and be able to do in their roles as leaders; this discussion focuses on the need to provide ongoing support and professional development for teacher leaders. Next, we identify and discuss three major challenges associated with teacher leadership: a) the time teachers have available in which to do their leadership work, and b) the development of legitimacy for their work in contexts of teacher resistance to reform, and c) the need to provide incentives that will encourage more teachers to take on leadership roles.

A. Why Teacher Leadership?

Since whole-school change began in Boston in 1996, new leadership roles for teachers have proliferated. The positions to which we refer include: literacy coordinators or facilitators who are supporting the implementation of new schoolwide literacy programs; transition specialists, standards facilitators, and curriculum lead teachers who support the implementation of specific district reform initiatives;[49] instructional team leaders and ILT members who guide the movement toward whole-school change more broadly; LASW facilitators; and many other informal leadership roles.[50] This proliferation of leadership opportunities is a strength of the

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[49] "Transition specialists" are teachers who are working to support the district's "transition program" which serves students who were identified as at risk of failing in grades 3, 6, and 9. Although their positions are designed differently at each school, these specialists, who support either literacy or math, typically work directly with students for part of each day and provide professional development (usually through collaboration) for their teacher colleagues; the positions were newly created for the 1999-2000 school year. In this report, we refer to these teachers as either "literacy specialists" or "math specialists," depending upon their role. Some schools also have "curriculum lead teachers" who support the implementation of standards at schools; these positions were also established for 1999-2000 school year, after the "standards facilitator" positions were discontinued. Like the standards facilitators (who were also charged with supporting standards implementation, but were in every school), they typically have full teaching loads and are expected to support their colleagues during their planning periods and before and after school.

[50] When we refer to teacher leadership, we are exclusively considering roles and positions that are aimed at furthering the progress of whole-school change and, in turn, instructional improvement. We recognize that there are other leadership roles that teachers play, such as serving on school site councils, but these are not the focus of this analysis.

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reform work and a critical piece of the BPS and BPE-BAC's efforts to build and sustain school-level capacity to carry out the reform. The teachers in these positions are the best allies and most valuable assets that schools have in pushing forward with this demanding reform agenda. They play a vital role in schools by a) facilitating the exchange of ideas among teachers around issues of instruction, and b) providing content-area support and expertise.

When we wrote about the status of LASW in our July 1998 report to the BPE, Education Matters emphasized the importance of trained facilitators in supporting these often-difficult conversations. In our more recent reports – the February 1999 report to the BPE and July 1999 report to the BAC – we wrote about the important roles that literacy coordinators were playing in supporting the implementation of schoolwide literacy programs and building school-based capacity for instructional improvement:

> Literacy coordinators play a significant role in implementation of the models and in providing support for teacher learning... Having a literacy coordinator at each site who is the "resident expert" is helping schools build internal capacity. Such capacity increases the likelihood that literacy expertise will remain in the school and that the model will continue to be implemented when the grant cycle ends. (February 1999 report to the BPE, p. 12)

In addition to the importance of teacher leadership in providing this essential on-site support, teacher leadership is a strategic means of establishing teachers' ownership of the reform work. Such ownership supports the development of internal accountability with respect to the implementation of schools' instructional programs and, therefore, diminishes a compliance-oriented response to the reform requirements. Finally, teacher leadership is a means of establishing broad capacity for the reform work. In other words, to the extent that more people are involved in a school's reform work, the progress that is made will be more sustainable in the event of administrator and/or teacher turnover.

Comments from the teachers and administrators implementing this reform reveal many advantages of having teachers in leadership positions. For example, two principals who work with relatively strong ILTs (characterized as Type 3 or 4 in the first section of this report) talked about the advantages of having teachers involved in making decisions that affect their schools' instructional programs:

> [The advantages of having teachers in leadership positions are] that the changes are institutionalized. They are not mandated. They've been processed, they've been adopted, and they're being used. It's not the same thing coming from the principal: a memo saying, "I expect you to do this." Teachers talk about it. They process it. They go through the same steps that you hope a student goes through in the learning process. (Administrator E)

> Teachers are implementing whatever the idea is... The implementation of an idea is the power, not having the idea. And coaches and consultants, I have found, who visit you can't do that implementation. (Administrator I)

Teachers also talked about the shift in power associated with teacher leadership and how it makes for a more collegial workplace. These teachers, like the principals quoted above, are working in schools that have relatively high functioning ILTs. Thus, shared decision-making is more of a reality in their schools than in others.

> It gives you more power over what the changes will be. Before, our principals would say what the changes would be... Now there really is much more sharing of power... I guess that's what it comes down to: The teachers are involved in the change, so teachers are just more on board. Of course there are always those that are sort of on the fringe, but I think, because we feel like we're doing it, it works better for all of us. (Teacher Z)

> You keep the power and the authority in your hands, and that just makes for a better workplace. (Teacher JJ)

> I imagine it makes other teachers on staff feel that it's not an us against them, that we're all in this together. I think too often people feel that we're labor, they're management. And they don't care about us and we don't care about them. But when you allow teachers to participate in the decision-making they feel that they've being listened to and they have a voice and that someone really cares about what they're saying. (Teacher MM)

Although we found fewer examples of teachers leading the reform work in schools with Type 1 and 2 ILTs, teachers did talk about instances where they had influence, and they exhibited the feelings of ownership that accompany leadership and decision-making:

> Teachers buy into what they have part of; if they're part of the decision then they buy into it much more... [For example] just choosing the literacy model, and there was some serious opposition to it from one group of teachers. And [other teachers] felt strongly enough that it was the right model for us that they pushed and shoved for it. And I think because they had to push and shove, they've embraced it more than they would have. (Teacher H)

This kind of teacher ownership is especially important given the goal of institutionalizing the structures and practices that currently define the work of whole-school change. This view of teacher leadership also acknowledges that teachers have power because they are the ones who must implement this reform agenda if it is to have the desired effect on instruction.

In addition to the advantages of having teachers in decision-making positions, teachers talked about the advantages of having teachers in content-based leadership positions – such as the literacy coordinators. This teacher explained that school-based teachers can provide more regular support:

> Having someone in your school, a colleague, someone who you know, someone who's doing something in the classroom where people can come in and see you doing and they trust what you're doing is something that's going to benefit the children. And having that consistency, I can talk to the person after I go in and watch what she does, or she comes to my classroom, and just having someone in the school, not someone who comes in once in a while, does a workshop, and goes away... Because teachers will, yeah, sure, I'll try this, and if it doesn't work and I'm having difficulties with it, if I'm having any questions, you're not here for me, so I'm just going to go back to doing what I did before. Just having someone here, they can come anytime and just talk. Someone to just think this whole thing through, it's just an advantage to just going off and going to workshops and all that. (Teacher TT)

As we noted in our previous reports, this type of leadership is critical to the implementation of schoolwide approaches to literacy instruction. Comparable support will be critical as the district moves forward with its agenda to improve mathematics instruction.

In the following section, we turn to a discussion of the knowledge and skill that these teacher leaders need and the professional development support that will be required if they are to succeed in their new roles.

B. Developing New Knowledge and Skill: Teacher Leaders' Need for Ongoing Professional Development

In order to do their jobs well and have credibility with their colleagues, teacher leaders must have strong content knowledge and pedagogical skills. In order to support the institutionalization of the Essentials, they need to have sophisticated understandings of the purposes of the associated activities. And, in order to effectively work with their colleagues, they need to have coaching and facilitation skills. Many teacher leaders in our sample schools developed much of this knowledge and skill in the course of their professional careers, and many have enhanced their knowledge and skill through the coaching support and professional learning opportunities that are associated with the current reform work. Many teacher leaders in our sample schools have a solid foundation of this knowledge and skill. However, many of these same teacher leaders emphasized that they do not see themselves as experts as much as they see themselves as somewhat farther ahead on the learning curve in a particular area. In light of this, many teacher leaders talked about their ongoing need for professional support. They also talked about sources of existing support which include coaches, external organizations (i.e., those that support their literacy programs), the BPE-BAC, and the BPS. We discuss here the areas in which teacher leaders need ongoing support as well as the existing sources of that support.

Developing Content-based Knowledge and Skill. Teachers in content-related leadership positions, such as literacy coordinators or transition specialists, frequently talked about their continuing need for content-based professional development.[51] They talked about their need for professional development to improve their own practice – especially when it came to implementing new instructional programs – as well as their need for content-specific resources to support their colleagues. For example, literacy coordinators might want to refine their skills in specific instructional strategies, such as guided reading, or expand their knowledge of assessment. They seek this knowledge and skill in order to deepen their own understanding of, for example, balanced literacy instruction. In this sense, their content-related needs are not qualitatively different from the needs of their colleagues. However, the lesson here is that teacher leaders will need to develop more and more sophisticated content-specific teaching strategies if they are to lead their colleagues towards more sophisticated understandings and deeper levels of implementation. Where there was this kind of support, it came from content coaches and through the externally-developed instructional programs. Content coaches provided classroom-based support by modeling lessons and by observing teachers and providing feedback. External organizations, such as Lesley College,[52] provided ongoing courses, invited teachers to attend conferences, and offered intensive summer workshops.

Teacher leaders who received this kind of external support valued the opportunity to collaborate with and learn from people outside of their school. In particular, teacher leaders told us about the importance of participating in study or inquiry groups as well as about the benefits of working with their school's coach. For example, a literacy specialist talked about how her school's coach supported her. She noted that the coach's experiences in other schools contributed to her own learning:

> She's the person I bounce things off of all the time... I have her come and observe my guided reading groups sometimes just to make sure that I'm on the right track... What are some strategies? ... [She] sees different schools, different kids. So what kinds of strategies could she give me? So she supports me that way. She'll watch me teach. And sometimes she may not have any more ideas than I do, but just another set of eyes watching the child can, she can think of things that I just didn't think of. And she's available. (Teacher Q)

By supporting a teacher who models instructional strategies in her classroom and engages in "over-the-shoulder" coaching with her peers, this function of the content coach – working to help this teacher leader improve her own skills – builds the school-based capacity needed to sustain the reform work.

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[51] While most of this talk centered around their needs with respect to literacy, we suspect that teachers' needs will be even more substantial when it comes to implementing new approaches to mathematics instruction in the coming year.

[52] Lesley College is the local organization that trains literacy coordinators in the Literacy Collaborative balanced literacy model.

Literacy coordinators who support the implementation of a particular literacy model talked about being supported by the organizations that provided their initial training. This ongoing, content-based professional development is the kind of support that will be required to build the strong teacher leaders who will eventually sustain this reform work:

> I still attend professional development at Lesley College, four days a year, and the early literacy conference in the fall, and I will be going to Ohio, in June... [And] I feel comfortable, always, to call Lesley College, if I needed support from any of the instructors that I had there, if I had a question. I feel very supported there. (Teacher U)

Literacy Collaborative coordinators also reported being supported by a study group:

> There's one thing, our study group. [A liaison] from Lesley is in charge of it. So she has a study group that meets once a month... She provides us with articles that she thinks are helpful, and that takes a lot of the burden off of me, where when we're sitting around she'd say, what are you interested in learning about? ... Then, the next time we meet she has pulled a couple of articles for us, and then I'll read those articles and choose which ones I want to copy for my teachers. So that's helped. (Teacher UU)

Literacy coordinators valued study groups like this because their needs informed the discussions and the kinds of support provided. In other words, they appreciated the balance of having focused, structured support *and* having the opportunity to shape the content of meetings.

However, adopting a literacy program that involves ongoing, intensive professional development for the designated coordinator does not always translate into sufficient support for teacher leadership. For example, teachers may be participating in the kind of ongoing professional development associated with a literacy model, but be stymied in their leadership role because they are working in a school that has not yet established a collaborative culture focused on instruction (i.e., schools with Type 1 ILTs and LASW groups). Such teachers are not able to be leaders because the structures and practices are not yet in place to support instructionally focused relationships with their colleagues.

Developing Deeper Understandings of the Components of the Reform Work. In addition to developing their knowledge and skills with respect to specific curricular content, teacher leaders need opportunities to develop their understanding of the content of the reform as a whole. This would involve deepening understandings of the various components of whole-school change and standards-based reform and the relationships between these components. Based on our observations and interviews, we are concerned that some teacher leaders – and even some administrators and coaches – have not had sufficient opportunity to develop such understandings. For example, as noted earlier in this report, teachers' understandings of the purposes of LASW and the performance assessments vary considerably. These are complicated concepts, and teachers who are facilitating the work of their colleagues around these Essentials need support as they come to understand the various components of the reform and how they fit together. Leadership work, especially participating on ILTs and facilitating LASW groups, necessitates a deep understanding of the reform. While we note that some do not yet have such understandings, there has been targeted training for teacher leaders that has helped to develop them. For example, a LASW facilitator talked about how she has benefitted from her training and how she hopes this will, in turn, benefit her colleagues:

> From attending meetings, the looking at student work facilitator meetings, but also from attending all other types of meetings, I feel like I do have a different understanding of looking at student work than other staff members in the building, which is helpful because then when I conduct these meetings I feel like I'm guiding the staff to look at the work the way that I have been taught to look at it... (Teacher QQ)

Because concepts such as the purpose of LASW and the notion of performance standards represent such a dramatic departure from traditional ideas about teaching and learning, more teachers need to be involved in professional development that will help them come to understand the reform. Only then will they be effective leaders of it. In other words, before teachers can facilitate the work of their colleagues, they must have content-based knowledge and skill as well as an understanding of the concepts behind the reform. Like teaching, part of peer coaching and facilitation is having the requisite knowledge.

Developing Coaching and Facilitation Skills. For most teachers, coaching and facilitating the work of their colleagues is not part of their existing skill set. However, teachers in leadership positions are working with their colleagues on ILTs and instructional teams (i.e., clusters and grade level teams) as they make decisions together and come to shared understandings. They are also working with their colleagues as they learn new ways to approach the content they teach. More and more, this involves sharing student work (which often reveals the teacher's work that led to it) and being open to peer observation. As we have said earlier in this report, as well as in previous reports, this work is hard and often threatening. Not surprisingly, teacher leaders regularly find themselves in difficult situations with their colleagues. In this context, many have come to recognize that they need a set of skills to help them deal with these situations:

> For most of us coaching is ninety percent new. We've never done it. And it's not supervisory, so that's kind of tricky, because you want to help, but you're not there to go running, and say, "This, this and this." You're there to help. It's hard to win that confidence. Sometimes people who haven't bought into the Literacy Collaborative– It's hard to try to go into their classrooms and help them... We asked for certain things [in our Literacy Collaborative study group], so they seemed to listen to us in what we wanted, and one of the things was more help with coaching. More help with trying to get people on board, who really are not interested. (Teacher UU)

> You also need some skills. There needs to be some training. How do you talk? How do you make the shift in who you are in your building? How do you talk to different kinds of people? How do you talk to the person who's scared to death to do it but wants to? How do you talk to the people who are so arrogant that they "yes" you to death, turn around, and do whatever they want? How do you talk to those different people in your building? What are some strategies that people who do this work have found work? ... There has never been any place that anybody has said, "This is how you do this kind of interpersonal work." Not the content, but this interpersonal work. (Teacher VV)

If coaching/facilitating professional development were provided to teacher leaders, typically it was organized around their positions – literacy specialists met together and Literacy Collaborative coordinators participated in a study group together.[53] This support was valuable in the sense that teachers in like positions often share common challenges and needs. For example, the literacy coordinator quoted next got support from her Literacy Collaborative study group. She talked specifically about how this forum for sharing of ideas regarding coaching helped her:

> When I first did the coaching ... I told them, "Let me know when you want me to come in." Well, nobody did, you know. And I was teased a lot with my colleagues because they said you could go until June and nobody's going to say [come in to my class]. And the next thing I did, I said, "Look, I have to come in." So I made a list and I went in on a rotation basis. And that, in hindsight, that wasn't good either because I'd go into one person's room and they would be gung ho working on guided reading... And I'd sit there with them and then I needed to go in the next day to help them right away. Well, I couldn't because I was on this rotation schedule. Now I think I would have said to them, "I'm going into everybody's classroom and just sit and watch, and then we'll have a conversation and I'll have one with each of you." And then, go from there, and sometimes go to somebody's classroom three weeks in a row... And I learned that... These workshops, they helped me see that you have to do it that way. But I wish I had the workshops before. (Teacher UU)

Coaches are another source of support for teacher leaders. They are uniquely positioned to provide targeted help in an ongoing way. Coaches can model facilitation and coaching skills, and they can observe teachers as they work with their colleagues and offer feedback. Teachers reported that such support helps generate new ideas and sharpen skills. For example, a LASW facilitator talked about developing her own facilitation skills by observing her school's coach as she worked with the other adults in the building:

> I think I've just gotten better at it... Especially from working so closely with [our coach], who I think is a fantastic facilitator, I've just learned more techniques... I

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[53] We heard, anecdotally, that the content and quality of the support provided to teacher leaders varied, but we did not collect systematic data that would allow us to comment on the specifics of the support.

> just feel like I keep getting better at getting the information from the staff instead of giving them the information. And I'm getting better at asking probing questions that will help them see the answer. And that really has just come from time and experience and just seeing good facilitators and just trying different things out myself. (Teacher QQ)

In this sense, the coach modeled her facilitation skills as she might model instructional strategies in the classroom.

We also heard from coaches who recognized the importance of supporting teachers to develop the skills to facilitate meetings and conversations with their colleagues. One coach characterized this as a long and slow process:

> I was looking at this year as the last year. And, [I] really [focused on] trying to build more capacity within the school so that the school could take over the reform work. And, that actually has turned out to be a slower and longer process than I thought... [If coaching continues next year] I think it should look different... What we've been thinking about is really stepping up the "building capacity" again. For example, this year I am the facilitator of the looking at student work sessions and I get them organized and I've done more work with teachers in preparing for the session. But I really am the one who facilitates, and once I see the discussion is going, I back out as much as I possibly can and so the teachers take it over. (Coach E)

In our sample schools, very little transfer of facilitation responsibilities is taking place in a structured way – i.e., where the coach observes (or even participates) while a teacher leads a LASW session or an ILT meeting. We know that this work is complicated by the limited time that coaches have in their schools. But we do not know the extent to which it has been made clear to coaches that this should be priority. Our observations of coach meetings suggest that capacity building has been emphasized, but most coaches are grappling with what this might look like. The result is that coaches recognize the importance of this work, but do not always follow through, as this coach notes:

> I'd like to ... take some time to shadow the facilitators... They're meeting with teachers, so it would be helpful for me to see how that role is going and whether or not I can now provide them with some support. It's a piece that's missing in the building capacity. (Coach F)

So, while we heard from teacher leaders and coaches about relationships that included efforts to establish school-based capacity with respect to facilitation and coaching skills, we also heard from coaches and teacher leaders that, in many cases, there is not a lot of communication among the many people supporting the various aspects of whole-school change. Where these relationships are not the norm, it reflects a missed opportunity to support teacher leaders as they develop new skills. We do not raise this in order to suggest giving coaches additional responsibilities. We realize that coaches already have many competing demands for their time. We are, instead, suggesting that priorities be examined. If supporting teacher leaders to become in-house coaches is deemed a priority, then this aspect of coaches' responsibilities will need to be more clearly defined and supported.

Summary. We have argued here that teachers will need to continue to develop their knowledge and skills if they are to lead the school-based reform work. As such, the BPE-BAC and the BPS will need to continue to support these teacher leaders as they deepen their content area and pedagogical expertise, further develop their understanding of the various components of the reform and how they fit together, and establish new skills in the areas of peer coaching and team facilitation.

C. Challenges that Face Teacher Leaders

Teacher leaders, other teachers, coaches, and principals recognize that there are challenges facing teachers who take on leadership roles. First, such roles are rather new in most schools and, as a result, teachers are not used to a) being peers with greater demonstrable knowledge and skill, or b) seeking or accepting support from peers on matters of teaching and learning. New roles and relationships need to be negotiated. Second, teacher leadership roles are part of the larger changes in the culture of the schools, changes that seek to make teaching more of a public endeavor and to engage teachers in collaborative design work central to improve teaching and learning. Such cultural changes are new and, as such, create tensions and uncertainties for principals as well as teachers. Many principals do not know how to relate to teachers in leadership positions. They do not know how to support teacher leaders' work with other teachers. Third, because teacher leadership sets some teachers apart from their colleagues and can demand considerable work, not all teachers who are capable of taking on the role want to try it. They can imagine the negative aspects of taking on such a role but have little to imagine that would recommend it. As a result, some schools lack a sufficient cadre of teacher leaders.

We begin this section with a discussion of the time issues associated with teacher leadership. Then we turn to issues of administrative and peer support. We end the section with a discussion of the disincentives that keep teachers away from leadership roles and the incentives that drawer them in.

Challenges Associated with Time. Again and again, teacher leaders raised time as a basic element that undermines progress with their reform work. Teacher leaders need time to observe classes, engage in over-the-shoulder coaching, meet with instructional teams to plan lessons and develop curricula and assessments, and prepare for classes taught after school. The teachers with whom they work also need time. They need time to observe these teacher leaders in their classrooms as they model lessons, and meet with their colleagues to discuss the implementation of new instructional strategies and curricula. In our sample schools, there are many examples of time being identified for these purposes and protected from other uses. However, in most cases, time remains a challenge.

In some cases, the hours teachers are required to work by contract are cited as an obstacle to more meeting time. More often, however, it is the structure of the time available, for example, 45 minute chunks, that limits teachers' opportunities to work together. For teacher leaders such as literacy coordinators or transition specialists, the amount of time they have to work with other teachers is dependent on the ways administrators structure their positions. We begin our discussion of the challenges posed by time by discussing the general problems. Then, we highlight some of the time-related challenges that literacy coordinators, in particular, face as they try to support their colleagues. We also provide some examples in which time is used creatively to support these teacher leaders. Finally, we present some proposed solutions to the problem of extremely limited time.

Challenges Associated with the Lack of Structured Time. When teacher leaders talk about structured time, they are talking about time built into their daily schedules (or into an extended day) that is allocated for their leadership work. The lack of such time left teachers frustrated as they found themselves excited by the work that they were engaged in, but lacking in opportunities either to build their own skills or share their new understandings with their colleagues. As this teacher explained, she was overwhelmed by her opportunities to learn, but limited in her ability to take advantage of the opportunities.

> I am overwhelmed in that there is so much support out there, I don't have time to get to it ... because of the constraints of what's going on and demanded from me in the school, [I don't have time] to access all of the available things that I would like to access... I think the support is tremendous. It's really there, to the extent that I would say it's not there, I would say, "Well when do they expect us to do all of it?" (Teacher I)

Others expressed similar sentiments:

> I sit in these meetings [BPS professional development for literacy specialists] I think, "Oh, this would be great. We can just sort of meet as a group and we could go over this and go over this." And you really see how these things, if planned right, can really benefit the kids. But the key is sort of planning it and having the time to plan it, having the time to implement it. (Teacher NN)

Another teacher leader talked about wanting to develop her leadership skills by participating on the Literacy Collaborative planning team and becoming a "lead learner" in math, but is frustrated that the only way to find the time is to leave her class:

> I like to be freed up to go, but I also hate the idea of being freed up to go. Then I'm out of my class. That's something that we have to work on... I feel like I'm out of the class a lot. (Teacher Z)

Like Standards Facilitators, transition specialists are constrained in fulfilling their roles due to the lack of structured time. Often, the challenges associated with time had to do with the ways that schools structured the work of these teacher leaders. For example, we found the design of transition specialists positions to be highly variable – some had time available to help colleagues while others had full-time teaching loads. We recognize that school-level flexibility can be a strength, but at the same time want to stress that without time built-in for teachers to work with their colleagues, merely having the title of a teacher leadership role does not lead to implementation of that role. A literacy specialist talked about this variation in the structure of leadership roles noting that without protected, structured time, she was limited in her efforts:

> It's kind of frustrating because... some of the literacy specialists in other schools are non-teaching positions... There's also people who are teaching just [part time]... There's also a few of us who are teaching full time. So it's not too feasible to do all of the things that are suggested to promote literacy in the school. (Teacher NN)

A math specialist talked about having time to model lessons but no time to debrief with teachers afterwards. The reality is that if teachers are to spend time working together, it often comes out of the time they might otherwise use for planning – or for eating lunch. A teacher leader who, like the math specialist, also works in her colleague's class described how she and her colleague – who are at different grade levels and have no common planning time – find the time to meet:

> She's been giving up her lunch, and I've been giving up a P&D [planning and development period], that's the only way we can do it... I happen to have a P&D, when she has a lunch. So that's when it's working, and we've been meeting immediately after [I am in her class]. (Teacher UU)

While these teacher leaders share the problem of having no protected time to meet with their colleagues, they differ in their solutions to this problem. The two teachers made different choices regarding whether to find the time to meet with the colleague with whom they were co-teaching – perhaps because they have different senses of their roles. In other words, post-conferencing after co-teaching, observing, or modeling lessons may not be seen as important by all teachers in leadership positions. This difference in choices may also reflect the extent to which each school has developed a collegial, collaborative culture focused on instruction. We would argue, however, that regardless of school culture and whether some teachers are willing to use their P&D periods, lunch times, and the time before and after school to meet with their colleagues, relying almost exclusively on this time for collaboration and school-based professional development establishes a shaky foundation upon which to build the capacity to sustain the current school reform work.

An Example: Finding Structured Time for Literacy Coordinators. Most of the schools in our sample have adopted literacy programs that develop a teacher as a literacy coordinator. The literacy coordinator has major responsibility for supporting implementation of the literacy program by coaching and providing other professional development for teachers. Teacher leaders who work as literacy coordinators may be expected to: a) teach the equivalent of one literacy block per day, b) open their classrooms to their colleagues in order to model the instructional program, c) coach their peers by observing in their classrooms and providing feedback and/or attending grade team meetings, and d) provide formal professional development after school. Despite the common characteristics of the positions, we found significant variation among schools in the ways they structured them. While the challenges associated with structuring time for these positions are many, some schools successfully employed creative approaches.

The main challenge has been to establish consistent, reliable ways to release literacy coordinators from some of their teaching responsibilities. Many schools have tried to do this by providing substitute teacher coverage. This strategy leads to at least two problems: first, it is not reliable because sometimes substitutes are used to cover the classes of teachers who are absent; second, it is not the most educationally sound option for students because of both the lack of continuity that comes with using substitutes and teachers' concerns about the expertise of substitute teachers.

Rather than relying on substitutes, most literacy coordinators talked about the need for job sharing arrangements that would enable them to feel comfortable leaving their classrooms to fulfill their other responsibilities:

> I need to be able to coach – to go into teachers' classrooms... In order to do that ... I need someone who's going to be there all the time, someone who's going to pick up where I left off... someone in the classroom who can be there all the time and learn what I'm doing at the same time and continue with the children. (Teacher TT)

> As literacy coordinator, I should have more time. There should be somebody coming in my room taking over a part of the education of my students where I don't have a role in it, so I can step outside the classroom and then do my job... As it stands, I'm still responsible for everything, and that makes it difficult. And what I mean by that, if there was a situation where a math specialist came in and taught math five days a week, and that's when I was out of my room and that's when I could go into the classrooms, that's when I could do the coaching, and it wasn't on the fly, and that's not happening. Utopia, that's what it would be. And in some places ... they're able to do it, but here, it isn't. So when it comes to coaching, it's wherever we can find time to do it, and that's unfortunate, because it's not valued as much as it should be. (Teacher UU)

While many literacy coordinators had some degree of job sharing and arrangements were worked out to varying degrees in the schools in our sample (described below), no literacy coordinator was satisfied with the time they had to do their coaching work. Even where a basic structure was worked out, literacy coordinators reported that there still was not adequate time for coaching:

> In the coaching sessions, ideally, you have an opportunity to talk to people before you coach them and then sit down, right away, and reflect afterwards. I would

> love that time to do that, not on the run, not on the run or not while the children are still there... The challenge for me is I need to teach and that's very important to me, it's also important that I do that. And it just leaves me just little pockets of time to meet with people. (Teacher U)

Some literacy coordinators, however, do not even have pockets of time on a regular basis. In at least one school in our sample, the literacy coordinator has nowhere near adequate support and the problem has persisted over the years we have been studying the school. As this coach described, the lack of job share-type arrangement has led to inconsistent release time for the literacy coordinator:

> It's been a big struggle. It doesn't work, to be honest. I mean, in this school it's not working. I would like to see other schools where it is working, where the coordinator's actually getting out of their room to coach other teachers. She is not. And I don't blame her... [The problem is] finding a consistent dependable substitute who she feels comfortable leaving her class with... She doesn't want to leave her class with somebody who can't control— She runs a tight ship. She doesn't want to come back and have them all off and running all over the place. She feels pulled between her responsibilities as a literacy coordinator and her responsibilities to her class. And the kids are her priority. (Coach D)

These challenges associated with time and the structure of these teacher leaders' days are formidable, given the hours in the school day and the many demands that compete for teachers' time. A few of our sample schools, however, have come up with creative solutions which involve relying on teachers who have other positions in the schools. For example, they use Title I and/or Reading Recovery teachers to provide release time. In most cases where teachers are sharing responsibility for students, they are together in the class some of the time and are able to align their instruction. This overlapping time in the class helps to establish shared understandings with respect to instructional strategies and students' needs, which in turn creates consistency for students.

In at least one case, the literacy coordinator had been a Title I reading specialist and so was able to "push in" to other teachers' classes for literacy instruction, but did not have responsibility for the remainder of the day.[54] This structure works better than most. She teaches two literacy blocks (with two different classes of students) three days a week. The other two days of the week she coaches other teachers and attends all of the Kindergarten, grade one, and grade two team meetings. Another literacy loordinator – who this year "pushes in" to a third grade – works closely with the Reading Recovery teacher who can then cover for her while she attends training sessions and supports her colleagues:

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[54] We use the term "push in" to mean that one teacher – in this case the literacy coordinator – enters another teacher's class to support particular students and/or model lessons. The term has come into use as schools have moved away from a traditional "pull out" model in which particular students were pulled out of their homeroom classes in order to work with specialists.

> She comes in in the morning, and she does work board activities that we set up the day before. She comes in to see what I'm working on, and we set up the activities for the kids, and she stays in here for three periods every Thursday. (Teacher UU)

While the amount of time that this literacy coordinator is released is minimal, the example is important because it illustrates a close working relationship between the teacher leader and the person with whom she shares her class. Allowing for continuity of instruction and a shared knowledge of the students helps to insure students a consistent learning environment. Finally, a school with a literacy coordinator in training relied on existing staff members to share in her teaching responsibilities so that there would be consistency when she left to attend week-long training sessions. In this particular case, the coordinator teaches a bilingual class and the specialists include an ESL teacher who pushes in for ESL while the teacher is there and then teaches ESL on her own while the teacher is out of the classroom. A Reading Recovery teacher pushes in for math and then takes over math instruction when the literacy coordinator is out. The principal at this school reflected on the "scrambling" that was required to provide this support:

> So it was scrambling, making a plan that made sense once [Irene] Fountas said that [the literacy coordinator] had to be in the homeroom... [So, we've been] putting pieces [together] to try to make it make sense, to make decisions that at least make sense, and are based around kids. Trying to keep things as stable as possible for kids. (Administrator F)

The challenges that principals face trying to create these staffing arrangements are significant and require creative use of human resources. The challenges are exacerbated in schools where the literacy coordinator's homeroom class is taught bilingually and, as a result, the person who relieves the coordinator needs to be bilingual. While administrators may need to more carefully examine existing resources, they are likely to need additional resources in order to provide their literacy coordinators with adequate time to fulfill their many responsibilities.

Possible Solutions to the Challenge of Time. These challenges are real as no one can create more hours in the day. They call for creative solutions that may significantly alter the organization of schooling to enable professional learning to be a built-in part of every teacher's work life. One teacher leader, talking about the need for teacher leaders in different schools to come together to support one another, called for thinking beyond existing increments of time:

> Is there a way of thinking outside this 45-minute period, one period a day in your own school? Is there a way of thinking about that differently so that people benefit from colleagues doing the same work? Doing this work in isolation is really hard... I think there's a way that cadre of people need to come together and support each other. It's really hard work. Emotionally it's hard work ... so you need some support. (Teacher VV)

Other teachers and at least one principal talked about the need to extend the school day if they are to have the time to do the work that needs to be done:

> I think the school day needs to be longer, first of all, because there's just always a mad rush for everything. And I think people need more time than within the school day to set aside to have these meetings and have these discussions and have these plannings for next year, and that we're not always under – in the fire about what are we doing this year. (Teacher LL)

> I think it's a huge issue which requires an eight hour pay day for teachers. I mean, to me, it takes a major transformation... It's not going to change in the foreseeable future. (Teacher AA)

> I think with what's going on the day needs to be longer... If this is important enough then we need to validate it by saying we all need to work eight hours, and not six, and not seven, and try to fit this in in six, and volunteer all of our time. It's ILT and SSC and SST and all the other things, committees that are mandated. It should not be on a voluntary basis. Validate their importance. End of story. Or, if they're not important, then volunteer and if it gets done fine, and if it doesn't it's not that important. I think that's a big issue. (Administrator I)

While many may not agree with the idea of a longer school day, and it certainly implies significant additional resources, the fact that these educators are suggesting it reflects the real constraints that they feel given the work involved in significantly improving instruction and raising student achievement. And, as we discussed earlier, relying on volunteerism will not establish a solid foundation on which to build the capacity of Boston's schools. The call for a longer school day also suggests, however, that these educators value the opportunities that they have to work collaboratively. In this sense, they are endorsing the importance of the activities and practices associated with the reform effort.

Summary. We have argued here that the existing organization of time in our sample schools severely limits the leadership work in which teachers are able to engage. Although there are some examples of creative uses of time, more often teacher leaders are stymied in their work by the lack of time that is available for collaborative planning and professional development. While the problem of time can be alleviated by creativity at the school-level, systemic changes are also needed in order to establish regular and protected time for teachers to work together to advance the goals of this reform work.

The Development of Legitimacy for Teacher Leadership. Teacher leaders faced another formidable challenge in dealing with colleagues who were resistant to change. Although the teachers in our sample overwhelmingly preferred leadership positions to be taken on by teachers (in contrast to administrators or consultants), some still resisted teacher leaders' efforts to a) help them learn about and attempt implementation of instructional programs or instructional strategies, b) facilitate meetings with colleagues to look at student work, plan lessons, and/or develop assessments, and c) encourage them to open up their classrooms to colleagues. We know that teachers are accustomed to working in what they consider an egalitarian environment and when colleagues take on leadership responsibility, they may be viewed suspiciously by others. Given such circumstances, many teacher leaders said that their efforts would be more successful if administrative support for their roles were more visible and consistent. They typically spoke about the need for clear administrative expectations within the school with respect to the implementation of *agreed-upon* schoolwide instructional programs.

The Problem of Resistance. Often, resistance to change is more subtle than overt. It results from a lack of time or attention rather than any deliberate or calculated effort on the part of teachers. For example, a literacy specialist who wearily complained about teachers repeatedly asking for the same information questioned her colleagues' commitment to engaging in the difficult work of developing new knowledge and skill. In our interviews, a few teachers confirmed that they do in fact resist collaboration with their colleagues. Sometimes, as in this case, it is for the reasons discussed previously – teachers are overwhelmed with work and feel they do not have the time to collaborate with anyone:

> I'm not trying to be cooperative with anybody at this point because I still have homework that I haven't corrected for days that the parents are asking me about. I have notes that I haven't answered from parents. I have other things I need to do, and where do I find the time? (Teacher XX)

Regardless of the reasons for it, resistance can lead to real challenges for teacher leaders. Some teacher leaders talked about their colleagues' resistance to co-teaching and/or peer observation. We found a "closed door" culture to be more prevalent in Type 1 and 2 schools, although all the schools in our sample seem to have some teachers who see classroom-based collaboration as an intrusion into their practice. A teacher leader at a school with a less collegial culture told us about this kind of resistance:

> It's very difficult to get into other people's classrooms and a lot of people don't want you there... It's hard to go into someone else's classroom. I've offered to go in and help the kids in science and social studies, and I was told that they didn't need help, that those teachers could take care of it themselves. (Teacher E)

A coach who was herself struggling to establish productive relationships with teachers talked about a teacher leader who was experiencing similar difficulties with her colleagues. In this case, teachers were unwilling to use the literacy specialist as a resource, opting instead to limit her role to working only with students during their P&Ds:

> The literacy specialist... she's really great, too. She's really on target... But she's having trouble, too, with teachers. The teachers have told her they don't want her doing this, this, this, and this. They want the kids finished the minute they walk in the door. They don't want her, I mean, they've put a lot of restrictions on her, too, which is not a good thing... She covers during P&Ds and she does literacy...

> And she really is right on target with a lot of things she's doing, but she's been restricted a lot by the teachers. (Coach G)

This example is particularly problematic given that literacy specialists were charged to work with both students *and* teachers. In other words, part of the role of literacy specialists is to spend a portion of each day providing professional development for their colleagues. It is evident from this example that teachers may not be aware of this aspect of the specialists' role. This lack of explicitly stated roles can lead to confusion and frustration on the part of everyone involved.

The principal quoted below reported teacher resistance that is active and deliberate. This kind of organized and collective resistance has the potential to thwart the teacher leaders' efforts in the school and the reform work more generally. This example also illustrates the limits of a principal's authority to insist that an instructional program be implemented:

> Some of the upper grade teachers are not nearly as receptive as the lower grade teachers were to literacy classes... We have in fact one teacher who is exerting a lot of negative leadership, who is just really dug in about this. And so [the upper grade literacy coordinator] has, I think, a daunting challenge in bringing this person along, and the whole team along. So in a way, this may not be the end of the world, although I'm upset about it because what we have is a cohort of kids who have had ELLI [through] third grade. They go on to fourth grade next year. So what I really was hoping for was that those kids would continue to get the ELLI treatment in fourth grade. The problem is that the teachers are this resistant group with this resistant leader. And so at this point we just have to say they're not going to get the continuity, the ELLI continuity. They're going to be doing something much more traditional next year. So this is a real setback. (Administrator J)

In most cases, the number of resistant teachers in a school is small, yet that group can be quite vocal and wield its power over more 'middle-of-the-road' teachers. Teachers and administrators reported that resistance – active or passive – can serve as a real disincentive for teachers considering taking on leadership roles. Many administrators and teacher leaders seem to feel that bringing all teachers on board will take time and, as we noted earlier in this section, will require strong coaching and facilitation skills on the part of teacher leaders:

> The one [disincentive] that stands out most for me and that we have been experiencing is the fact that when a teacher is placed in a position of, let's say, facilitator, in a leadership position, then he or she may be perceived initially as "Who is she telling me what to do?" ... For example, the LC coordinators this year, they are peer coaches and because that trust is not there yet with some people ... there have been some challenges that emerge. (Administrator C)

The Need for Administrative Support. The impact of this resistance depends in large degree on the predominant culture in the school and the roles that administrators play. Support and, in some cases, intervention on the part of administrators can be pivotal. In fact, when asked about the incentives and disincentives to take on leadership roles, teachers often cited the lack of administrative support as a disincentive. For example, teacher leaders in many of our sample schools talked about the failure of their administrations to provide "backbone" to their efforts:

> When something is started there is no follow through. Ideas are presented, but there's no follow through. I think that's a disincentive. (Teacher HH)
>
> [Teacher leadership leads to] more work and more frustrations. I mean, they give you these things, you know you take on the leadership thing and then you don't really get the backing so it's like spinning wheels... I mean, you try to coach people and if they don't want to do it they don't do it. And you have no support. I mean, you have nothing to help you give that support. There's no backbone to it. I mean, you can bring the horse to the water but you can't make them drink. You can expose them to things, but... [for example, a teacher leader here] has worked a couple years trying to get [a schoolwide instructional program] off the ground. And there's probably a good portion of the faculty that's not doing it. She said to the administration, "We need you to go into the classrooms... if we're going to take this on as a schoolwide curriculum we need you to go into the classrooms and see if people are doing it." And you don't get that backing so, then you throw up your hands... You're creating enemies. So there's not a whole lot of incentive. (Teacher SS)

As the teachers quoted above suggested, they see the "follow through" or "backing" as an administrative responsibility. Teacher leaders were clear that this is not their role, rather someone in an authoritative position vis a vis the faculty has to hold teachers accountable:

> When I come in, I'm not an administrator. I can't make you do it. I can come and suggest things to you, but I can't make you do it. And sometimes that's a frustrating thing when I'm putting in all this time. But that's the principal's job. (Teacher Z)
>
> A really strong principal has a really nicely run school and some presence. And if it's not her, then an assistant principal. I mean, there has to be somebody. It's like the good cop, bad cop, but there has to be somebody that plays that role. (Teacher W)

Some of the administrators in our sample also spoke to the importance and necessity of their supervisory role in supporting teacher leaders facing resistance from their colleagues. They value teacher leaders' work to forward the school's instructional agenda and recognize the limits of their ability to put pressure on teachers who have not bought into the reform:

> They can put out the resources, they can do the training, but ... only the administrator can be the evaluative, supervisory person, if they need to. [Teacher

> leaders] shouldn't be doing that kind of role. They should be supportive, resourceful, but when they need an extra kind of backing, then you're there. (Administrator G)
>
> The other support [I need to provide] sometimes is being the heavy when need be... [Our literacy coordinator] is not a supervisor, she can't make people do something, and sometimes I'll have to step in and help. And she needs that sometimes so that she can maintain the type of relationship with her colleagues that makes it comfortable to have conversations about change and growth. (Administrator I)

The Provision of Support: Visions and Strategies. This call for administrative backing is not a call for more top-down mandates; rather, it is a call for support coupled with a cooperatively forged and clearly articulated set of expectations. One teacher leader shared her vision of what this would look like:

> The administration has the expectations because they're the educational leaders, and the faculty has the expectations because they really want their practice to be the best it can be. They know that doesn't happen in isolation. They know that it happens in conversation. It happens through observations. It happens from goal-setting and from measuring. That's where it happens – with everybody looking at it as: "We're all in this together," [or] "I so respect you as the person who is leading this piece of work that I really am interested in the input that you have," or "I so respect the work that you're doing in this classroom that I want to support you any way I can." Is this sounding utopian? This is the place I want to be. (Teacher VV)

Another teacher at the same school imagined a process whereby the administration could make its expectations clear to everyone on the faculty. She goes on to offer an example of a possible intervention strategy:

> You try to intervene first by saying, "Well, what do you need? We're going to do this. What supports do you need in order to do this? Because it's a lot. What do you need to be able to do this? Let's see what we can do." Visiting the classrooms to see that it's being implemented is another way, to go in certain classrooms. Being present at a grade team meeting in which maybe some of the members are reluctant... [The principal], I know, has spoken directly to one teacher who was reluctant to implement something, so that kind of thing can happen, too... I think it's hard for a coach or a coordinator to be in that position... And so I think it's up to an administrator ... to regularly check in with them, so they generally know if things are going well, but not to put them in too supervisory a role. I don't know how to really do that balance... It's like you want them to be in a supportive, nurturing, resourceful role, but they also need to be able to tell you that this isn't working, and you need to know it because you need

> to do something about it, because you have this commitment that you want to work, and if you don't follow it through, then other teachers will see one teacher or two teachers not doing it, so you always have to look at that. It's always problematical. (Teacher R)

These teachers also talked about the role the ILT could take on these issues. They talked about how the ILT could become a forum in which teachers and administrators talked about the status of the implementation of a program and then discussed strategies for getting all teachers on board. They were discouraged that this kind of conversation did not yet take place at ILT meetings.

Where interventions actually took place, administrators used a range of approaches – presumably depending upon how long the situation had persisted. For example, one administrator talked about her approach if she learns of a teacher resisting the support of her colleagues:

> [When teacher leaders are struggling with colleagues who are "not on board"] I give advice sometimes; I say, "Let's try this." Or I talk to the teacher individually and say, "By the way, I'm sending this person to you, to help you out, because you have these needs that need to be met, and I expect you to really work with this person." I mean, I've done that very little this year. But if I have to do that I will do that. (Administrator H)

Another administrator at the same school described what she was doing in response to a situation of persistent and prolonged resistance on the part of a teacher on her staff:

> I gave an unsatisfactory [evaluation] and that has created a " wake-up call" and so [she] will meet with me now. There's still a lot of passive resistance to what I'm asking or talking about in our meetings together every week, but if I don't see the changes, you know, I'll give an unsatisfactory again. The coaches don't have that [authority], [nor does] the literacy coordinator. But [in one case] where there's tons of support being given by [the coach] and it's not sticking, we know that, so it's up to either [the principal] or myself to go in and ... give an unsatisfactory or give them more of a mandate. (Administrator K)

Because not all teachers are willing and/or able to take on the challenges of learning new instructional programs, sometimes these messages or mandates lead to the departure of resistant teachers. Teacher leaders shared instances where teachers with whom they worked – or tried to work – decided to leave the school after an intervention by the administration:

> At the beginning of the year, [the principal had to write [the teacher] like a formal memo saying that I would be working with her and these are the things that I'd be expected to be showing her how to do. The teacher left. (Teacher Q)

> This year I had an experience [with a resistant teacher], and I spoke to the teacher several times, because I didn't want to go to the administration. I didn't want to create any bad feelings between us colleagues, being in the same union and all that. I was very upset. I really don't like to create any problems in this school. But then I found myself in the position that I really needed to go to administration and I did. ...I went to administration, and they supported me... They approached the person and talked to them in a way. But I found the person is not happy about doing this literacy program and is going to be transferring to another school... (Teacher TT)

Notably, the interventions that teachers and administrators described to us all came from schools where an instructionally-focused collegial culture was developing (i.e., Type 3 and 4). We are not surprised that examples of administrative intervention are correlated with more collegial and instructionally focused school cultures, because the interventions themselves are evidence that administrators in these schools support the efforts of teacher leaders and the goals they are helping to achieve.

As mentioned earlier, administrators who have an ongoing and reliable presence in the classroom are much better positioned to know which teachers are "on board" with the reform initiatives and which teachers need to be nudged. These administrators do not have to rely on teacher leaders' complaints about their colleagues, instead they have first-hand knowledge of what is happening in the classroom. The examples below come from a school which has, over the course of our study, come a long way in developing a collegial, collaborative school culture.

> [The principal] is around quite a bit... At one point, she would make her rounds just about every day... She would come in, and she would even help out and become involved in whatever is going on. And she ... comes to our meetings, our cluster meetings, and at some points she gives feedback then, and if we're doing something that she really likes or if we're involved in activities that she really sees the students, that she feels that they're progressing, she will recognize me and the class [more publicly]. (Teacher PP)

> [The principal] is in my room, sometimes every day, sometimes maybe three times a week. It could be just saying, "Oh, so and so's mother called and we talked about this, could you call?" It could be she'll come in and just sit down somewhere and sit for five or ten minutes. She could walk in and walk over ... and say, "Oh, what are you doing?" to one of the students, and "Why are you doing this?" So she comes in and out a lot. (Teacher W)

In our sample of schools, this kind of administrative presence in classrooms is rare. In some schools, teachers reported that administrators are never in their classrooms. To the extent that an administrator's presence in classrooms is a means of communicating expectations with respect to the instructional programs that teacher leaders are working to support, this lack of first-hand knowledge can significantly undermine the teacher leaders' efforts.

However, even in this school, where the principal clearly tries to communicate her priorities by her presence in classrooms, her power to get resistant teachers on board is limited. In this sense, we do not want to oversimplify the challenge of establishing shared expectations – especially because to a large extent people, whether or not they are in positions of authority, are limited in their ability to convince others to learn and do new things.

Although their hiring power is somewhat limited, another strategy that administrators have used to change the culture of their schools has been to make expectations clear to new hires. One coach described how this approach changed the culture at a school with which she works:

> The culture of the school has changed so much. Because people are really working together more. They are really talking to each other more. There is more of a unified feeling. Now that doesn't mean that there isn't variation. But it's less extreme, for one thing. People who still are resisting are, maybe they're not quieter about it, but they don't rock the boat quite as hard anymore. Part of that I think is because [the principal] is very mindful of her staff. New staff has come on and she's made this very clear at the school site council, and the personnel committee of the school site council, that we are moving in a certain direction, we want people who can do that, who know about literacy and see it as we do, who understand about teaching kids to be independent. So part of the change in culture has just been by sheer getting bodies of people who think along the same lines. (Coach H)

A teacher, who was anticipating turnover at her school, also saw this as a promising way to continue the work that they had begun:

> There's going to be a lot of staff turnover in this school... So I feel like it's either a golden opportunity to really inculcate [practices that have been put in place] as people come in, or it's a place where it could really slide by the wayside if it's not made very clear to people up-front. And it's kind of just like what happens with kids at the beginning of the year... if you say, this is something we do, and then you don't really do it right away, then this will just slide away. (Teacher KK)

A principal's ability to hire, and keep, teachers who are knowledgeable or willing to learn about her school's chosen instructional programs will be an important factor in insuring the sustainability of today's reform work.

Summary. We have argued here that teacher leaders need, and want, administrative support as they work with their colleagues. This, of course, requires administrators to consider how to go about establishing clear expectations in their schools with respect to participation in the reform work. While we understand that administrators are, to some extent, constrained in their ability to impose expectations, we believe that much more could be done at most of our sample schools towards establishing clear, schoolwide expectations. For example, an administrator's presence in classrooms, participation in grade team or cluster meetings, and ongoing engagement in professional development can go a long way towards making priorities clear. Such close-up involvement in the reform work also serves to develop an administrator's expertise with respect to the implementation of new programs and practices which in turn makes her a more credible colleagues and supervisors. As we have argued in the past, for administrators to participate at this level in the reform work, they are likely to need relief from some of their other, less instructionally relevant functions.

Developing More Teachers Leaders: The Role of Incentives

> *I think we need ... to train a whole cadre of folks from each school to be facilitators within their teams, within the study groups, etc. So that you have a core of folks where it's not going to be decimated if one person leaves the building. And then to have ongoing whatever you call them, cadre training, cadre support meetings, and summer reinforcement training... At this point, at the [school I coach] there is a good six or seven incredibly strong leaders that could easily take on a very good role.* — Coach C

As this quote suggests, there is a need to broaden the leadership base in schools. In our sample schools, we found that too much of the responsibility for the reform work was being taken on by too few people. Often a few individuals simultaneously played more than one of the roles of team or cluster leader and ILT representative; curriculum lead teacher and transition specialist; LASW facilitator and literacy coordinator. These few individuals lead and sustain their schools' reform work with short-term benefits but long-term problems: these individuals are likely to burn out. Schools, most often do not have a strategy for increasing the number of people who are developing new understandings of the components of the reform as a result of actively participating in it. And, therefore, they have no "pipeline" for developing additional teacher leaders. We begin this part of the teacher leadership section by illustrating the general problem of concentrated leadership. We then discuss the incentives and disincentives – the personal rewards and challenges – that currently exist with respect to leadership, as these must be considered if more teachers are going to be persuaded to take on leadership work.

Problems Associated with Concentrating Leadership Among a Few. Across our sample of schools, teacher leaders expressed regret that too few of their colleagues were willing to take on the challenges of leadership. They mentioned that this caused them to feel discouraged and resentful towards their less active colleagues. These comments sounded much the same across the schools:

> What happens is ... you have those people who are always raising their hands and saying, "I'll do this. I will take this leadership role. I will do this." And what happens is you get burnt out because you're the same people doing it over and over again... And it's also kind of discouraging when you see a few who aren't, you know, on this committee or who are not taking a leadership role. So it's kind of discouraging. (Teacher Y)

> It's always the same people who do it, out of commitment and love to what they do. And other people don't do anything. That's not right. I don't know if that's the case of only this school or it's a general thing... But, this is my world here, and that's the way it works, always the same people. And it's not right. And people who are committed resent that, because the other ones are getting away with nothing, and they're being paid the same. That's not right. (Teacher FF)

The problems associated with the leadership skills and positions being held by too few were somewhat more acute at the large schools in our sample. In these cases, the problem was that there were not enough teacher leaders to work with the large staffs.[55] For example, an administrator at a large school talked about this problem:

> The fact that facilitators are provided for the schools is extraordinary... The difficulty is you get one English language arts facilitator to cover an entire building... there's a lot more ground that you can cover with a small school and one language arts facilitator, or one math facilitator, than with a school that has a faculty of sixty with one math facilitator and one language arts facilitator. So, if you ask me, is it worthwhile? Positively. Could we use three more of the same? Absolutely. (Administrator L)

A teacher at another large school also talked about how they could benefit from more teacher leaders. Talking specifically about the math facilitator, she said:

> We're doing the best we can. I do feel the math is being catered to as much as it can be. We would certainly like a facilitator attached to each grade. (Teacher C)

In other cases, the "problem" is the presence of particularly competent and willing teachers who take on too much because they are willing and able, or because fewer of their colleagues are interested in taking on leadership roles. For example, at one school, when we asked the administrators what the work of literacy specialist entailed, they reported with pride:

> [She] does everything. I'm not trying to be facetious or evade your question. [She] does everything. [She] goes from [teaching a full day]... She does the coordination for English language arts... She does the coordination of all the testing of the kids, and the level one kids. She does another coordination with them... She basically runs everything that has to do with literacy. She teaches the [literacy] course after school. [She] is a busy person. Very busy body.... [She] does everything. (Administrator D)
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> Every time I tell anybody what our literacy specialist does, people ask, "Well does she ever sleep?" So she does a lot... It's a big job. We have a lot of

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[55] Very small schools also faced challenges – primarily because the pool of teachers who could take on leadership roles is limited by the size of the staff.

> expectations. The system has a lot of expectations from these people. (Administrator M)

In this case, the literacy specialist realized that she was spreading herself too thin:

> I went overboard. A lot of the other transition teachers are only teaching [part time], and they have that extra time to do this stuff... But I didn't want to feel like somebody was going to say to me, "It's not a real job. You're not really teaching." So instead I filled my schedule, and I have overfilled it... So it would be very helpful to have another adult even to work with. That is probably one of the biggest things... And the other thing that I don't think they're quite realizing is there are so many skills these kids need... There's a lot of requirements... [and] we have some students that are very, very needy. (Teacher E)

Another issue that emerges when small groups are leading the reform work is the perception – sometimes well founded – that the teacher leaders are part of a political "in-group" that, in some cases, does not reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the staff. Teachers from two different schools raised this issue in our conversation with them:

> *Q. What would you say are the incentives, here, for teachers to take on a leadership role?* A. I don't know. Here's what I will say... It really concerns me that the teachers who have taken – that it's not more diverse. That really troubles me. And I don't know why that is, but it really, really troubles me. (Teacher N)

> Some people view you if you take on a leadership role, that there is a split in the school that, or maybe it's just one or two people, I don't know, but it seems like if you go out and you try to educate yourself and then come back to your school you're perceived as, Oh all the white teachers – It's been said that all the white teachers have all the opportunities to be leaders. And there's a division in the school over that. (Teacher SS)

To the extent that this is a reality – or even a perception – it will need to be addressed if the adults at these schools are going to come together for the sake of the students. One way of addressing such perceptions is to make efforts to include more teachers in the leadership work and spend some time discussing these difficult adult issues.

The problems associated with concentrated leadership translate into disincentives for many. We discuss these next and then turn to the incentives that motivate teachers to take on leadership roles.

1. Disincentives. As suggested in an earlier part of this section, the most frequently cited disincentive to this work is time. Because leadership work is being added to classroom work, without accommodations for the re-organization of teachers' work days, teacher leaders said that they were "burning out" and were contemplating withdrawing from their leadership activities.

Many teacher leaders, across all school types, talked about how their leadership work has affected them in this way, for example:

> I'm very tired, and I'm getting really so tired that I'm shutting down. And the incentives [to play a leadership role] initially were to be obviously part of the school... And it was enjoyable. But there's so much coming our way that even I, who tolerated a lot, I'm getting tired and angry and resentful, and I'm shutting down. (Teacher D)
>
> I'm not on the leadership team this year, and I've given up– I used to be on the school site council. I've given up a couple of things because I find that I really don't have enough time... I felt that I was scattered too often, in the classroom, and just sort of doing things out there and not doing things which were in front of me. So I've really tried, over the years, to sort of wean [myself] away from some things. (Teacher NN)
>
> One thing that I've learned through this whole reform process as a teacher is I am a better teacher when I'm not trying to be involved in the whole-school change process. And I hope that's not going to take us all the way back to where we were. (Teacher CC)
>
> After a while it got to the point where you were doing so much that you weren't doing your first job, which was teaching the children. Or, you were doing it, but you weren't able to give all your enthusiasm and energy to it. And I found that, about two years ago, I kind of said, "This isn't working." And yet I wouldn't want to see someone come into the building and do all of those little jobs that we're all taking pieces of and not be one of us, not be someone who knows our school and the atmosphere here and so on. So, it's sort of a no-win. (Teacher X)

This burnout and withdrawal is an outcome of some real disincentives. Many of these – the lack of structured time in which to do the work and the lack of clear, shared expectations with respect to the work – were discussed earlier. Another disincentive is the personal and financial cost, as this teacher explains:

> I'm going to be going ... to Lesley for two weeks [this summer]. The transportation is coming out of my pocket. I also need to arrange for babysitting for my children, and I don't want that to come out of my budget... *Q. So you're not paid during the time that you go to Lesley College?* A. No. And I wasn't paid over the summer, either, last summer when I went. I mean, I'm doing this for the children, I'm doing what I would do for my own development, but I don't want it to be a burden... I hope I'm not sounding like a greedy person or taking advantage. I want to do this, I want to do this program, and I want to do it for the school and for the children... Next year, I'm going to be doing a lot of professional development; I'm going to be doing a 40 hour course. *Q. You have*

> *no stipend as a literacy coordinator?* A. No stipend for what I'm doing. (Teacher TT)

As we have discussed throughout this section, teachers are well-positioned to be leaders in the work of reforming their schools: They have skill and credibility, they are in their buildings full time, and they are of course the ones implementing the changes. Taking on this important work, and becoming a leader, should not be a financial burden to teachers. Providing inadequate support, and thereby creating disincentives for teachers working to lead school-based improvement efforts, undermines the possibility of establishing a strong foundation from which to build capacity for ongoing improvement. Fortunately, however, there are incentives for teachers to take on this work.

2. Incentives. Most teachers told us that the incentives to take on these roles were some combination of a) the opportunity for professional growth, b) the opportunity to improve the school for the sake of students, and, to a lesser extent, c) the opportunity to earn additional money. Teachers' responses to questions also revealed that the leadership roles were only of interest if they felt they could be efficacious with respect to the aforementioned incentives. In this sense, teachers in schools that had more well developed collegial cultures (i.e., Types 3 and 4) were able to identify more incentives to engage in leadership work. In the schools with more traditional school cultures (i.e., Types 1 and 2), teachers' responses emphasized the disincentives rather than the incentives.

Teachers who identified the opportunity for professional growth as an important incentive talked about the collegiality that accompanies the work, their love of teaching, and their desire to be "in the know" about the reform agenda:

> Just being a part of the change that was happening in the building was intrinsically rewarding... Another kind of intangible reward is the collegiality that is formed when you work closely, more closely with your colleagues on particular issues. I think it's a form of professional development. (Teacher CC)

> It's that you love your work, that you have passion for your work, that's the only incentive... I will tell you, we do it because we love teaching. (Teacher YY)

> It's nice to know what's going on... Like it was nice to go to this looking at student work meeting and to be in the group of teachers who have been looking at student work, as opposed to being in the group of teachers who have never heard of looking at student work. It's nice to know what's going on. It's nice to be recognized professionally... It's nice to be perceived as knowing something. It's nice to be regarded among your peers. (Teacher NN)

Others, who also found it personally satisfying, said that their main incentive was to improve their schools:

> When I look at the people in the ILT, they believe in what we're doing, they believe that this is what's best for the children. And so because they believe that this is what's best for the children they've decided this is what we need to do to move forward and I need to take a leadership role. (Teacher Y)

Some talked about the incentives with respect to the system as a whole:

> I think it's very satisfying, and it makes you grow, and it makes the system grow. (Teacher R)

And, while many talked about the financial incentive, they were fairly consistent in reporting that the amounts of money were too insignificant to be the primary incentive:

> It's not monetary... The ILT, you can't do that for money... it's minimal [money]. Literacy coordinator, there isn't anything. So I think it's your own personality and how much you want to put into your building and how much you want the school to be successful. I think it's as simple as that. (Teacher UU)

So, while money does not currently serve as the critical incentive for many teacher leaders, it is viewed as something that validates them and their leadership work. For example, one teacher talked about how getting paid was not an incentive for her, but that she thought her colleagues viewed her as having more legitimacy when she started getting paid a stipend for her work:

> Some of us did it even before we were compensated for it... To have a leadership role now, and be paid for it it makes it a little more valid, and it makes it a little bit more professional, I think, in the eyes of the people who have to accept information from me or instruction from me. (Teacher X)

And, like the principals and teachers who suggested that a longer school day – i.e., more paid time – would validate the work they are doing, a principal talked about the importance of stipends for literacy coordinators:

> If we don't support them in as many ways as possible, we could find ourselves falling flat on our faces with this literacy model... Boston is paying facilitators – language arts, math, all of those [positions]. Boston is paying Lead Teachers to be mentors to one or two teachers. [Literacy coordinators] are mentoring a lot [of teachers] – in this school she's mentoring every teacher in kindergarten, first, and second grade. Zero pay. ZERO pay. There's just no respect [for her work] in the Boston schools... I'm trying to validate the work as best I can, but... I would like the BPE to help us to band together to get that respect. (Administrator F)

Certainly, literacy coordinators are engaged in some of the most important and valuable work that is taking place at these schools. And, we agree that the extent to which teachers are compensated can reflect the value placed on their roles. As a result, compensation for leadership positions should be aligned with the work in which teachers are engaged and the expertise they bring to that work.

Summary. We have argued here that Boston schools need to broaden their leadership base if they are to sustain, and hopefully accelerate, current reform efforts. Although there are probably more formal leadership positions than ever in Boston Public Schools as a result of the whole school change work, if BPS educators are to improve their instruction to meet the needs of the students and the demands of local and state reforms, even more teachers will need to take on work outside of their own classrooms. In most of our sample schools, there is a small cadre of teachers who take on all of the reform-related leadership work. We are concerned that these individuals may tire of continually carrying this load themselves. We also think it's important for more teachers to engage in leadership work so that they deepen their understandings of the various components of the reform. We encourage the BPE-BAC and the BPS to continue, and strengthen, their efforts to develop and adequately support teacher leaders, and consider the existing incentives and disincentives with respect to teachers' willingness to take on leadership roles.

D. Summary: Teacher Leadership. Boston's reform requires the development and support of teacher leaders who can, in turn, support their colleagues. Such teacher leaders are essential for establishing and sustaining the collegial, collaborative school cultures in which teachers and principals focus on instructional improvement. In many respects, Boston is off to a good start in supporting teacher leadership across the grades. Whole-school improvement has created many new opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively and for some to lead the work. We have highlighted teachers' leadership roles throughout this report in discussions of the ILTs, LASW groups, and implementation of performance assessments. Schools that have achieved high functioning components of reform would not have been so successful without the hard work of teacher leaders.

However, many challenges remain for the BPE-BAC and the BPS to consider in creating structures and strategies that will support teachers in this important work. We have highlighted them in this last section of this "Taking Stock" report. Addressing the challenges would strengthen the work of teachers in leadership positions and enhance the implementation of improved teaching and learning. Toward this end, we review what teacher leaders need to sustain and nurture their work.

- ***Teacher Leaders in content-related leadership positions, such as literacy coordinators or transition specialists, frequently talked about their continuing need for content-based professional development.*** Teacher leaders report that they will need to develop more and more sophisticated "pedagogical content knowledge" if they are to lead their colleagues towards more sophisticated understandings and deeper levels of implementation.

- ***In addition to developing their knowledge and skills with respect to specific curricular content, teacher leaders need opportunities to develop their understanding of the***

various components of whole-school improvement and standards-based reform and the relationships between these components.

- ***Most teacher leaders have come to recognize that they do not have a solid grounding in how to coach and facilitate the work of their colleagues. As a result, they need professional development to improve their coaching/facilitating skills.***

- ***Teacher leaders need structured time to observe classes, engage in over-the-shoulder coaching, meet with instructional teams to plan lessons and develop curricula and assessments, and prepare for classes taught after school. The teachers with whom they work also need time to observe these teacher leaders in their classrooms as they model lessons, and meet with their colleagues to discuss the implementation of new instructional strategies and curricula.*** Although there are some examples of creative uses of time in our sample schools, generally, teacher leaders are stymied in their work by the lack of time available for collaborative planning and professional development.

- ***In the context of teachers' resistance to a) learning about and attempting implementation of instructional programs or instructional strategies, b) meeting with colleagues to look at student work, plan lessons, and/or develop assessments, and c) opening up their classrooms to their colleagues, teacher leaders need administrative support and clear expectations regarding their work.*** Many teacher leaders suspect that their efforts would be more successful if administrators more overtly supported their work. ***Providing such support requires administrators to consider how to go about establishing clear expectations in their schools with respect to participation in the reform work.***

IV. THE STATUS OF WHOLE-SCHOOL CHANGE IN COHORTS I AND II: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this report is to enable the BPE-BAC to take stock of the status of implementation of the Essentials in Cohort I and II schools in order to determine whether and to what extent a) the reform components theorized to be connected with improved teaching and learning are in place and effective, and b) implementation of those components is associated with meaningful improvements in schools' capacity to focus on instruction. Our analysis led us to conclude that schools with well-functioning ILTs and strong LASW groups are far more likely to be schools in which principals' and teachers' work is increasingly collegial, collaborative, and instructionally focused. Such schools, in turn, have established the capacity to take on additional components of reform, for example, implementation of performance-based assessments. They provide an environment in which teacher leaders are developing more significant roles in supporting the improvement of teaching and learning. No school in our sample has a collegial, collaborative and instructionally focused culture without well-functioning ILT and LASW groups. No school has this culture without strong, instructionally oriented principal leadership.

With one exception, the schools in our sample did not have these kinds of organizational structures in place prior to joining Cohorts I or II.[56] Therefore, we feel confident in concluding that it was the BPE-BAC intervention that propelled the schools to establish these structures that, when used well, are fundamentally changing the traditional managerial orientation of principals and the isolated roles of teachers. Implementation of the structures has led principals and teachers to engage collaboratively in the work of improving instruction. Some of this knowledge was embedded in the opportunities to learn associated with the balanced literacy programs schools selected. These programs, for example, the Literacy Collaborative, supported teacher collaboration and the development of in-school teacher leadership for the improvement of literacy instruction. They also stressed the importance of obtaining frequent assessments of students' work that would inform the next phase of instruction. As such, the literacy programs provided the initial, content-focused arena in which teachers could develop new capacities, roles and relationships.[57] The literacy programs supplemented the opportunities to learn that were provided by BPE-BAC WSC coaches who helped principals and teachers develop functioning ILTs and LASW groups.

After three or four years of cohort participation, approximately half of the schools in our sample, those with Type 3 and 4 ILTs and LASW groups, are well on their way to having the kind of school organization and culture envisioned by the reform design. Their ILTs function as leadership teams that focus the whole school on instruction. LASW groups recognize the importance of using student work as a window into the quality of teaching. Their engagement with performance-based assessments suggests a willingness and capacity to make use of data to inform instruction. Teacher leadership for reform is being established and, to varying degrees, is seen as legitimate. This is evidence of schools' growing in-house capacity to sustain the work of continuous school improvement. To the extent that the theory is correct and these kinds of structures and cultures will lead to a) more instructionally focused and appropriate professional development, b) improved instruction, and, thereby, c) increased student learning as represented by scores on the state's and district's formative and summative assessments, these schools seem to be on their way. However, approximately half of the schools have not made this kind of progress. They are in danger of failing to achieve the kinds of changes that the theory posits will lead to improved teaching and learning. Our analysis reveals that such schools have been unable, for a variety of reasons, to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the BPE-BAC supports.

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[56] One school in our sample had adopted an instructional program that built collaborative relations that focused on instruction several years prior to becoming a cohort school. Participating in the cohort work has strengthened the culture that was already developing.

[57] Not all of the literacy programs were as powerful as the Literacy Collaborative in providing teachers with opportunities to develop new capacities, roles and relationships. In particular, we think this is true of the programs available to the middle schools.

At this point, when the BPE-BAC will begin to provide fewer resources to Cohort I schools but will sustain its high level of support for Cohort II schools through the 2000-2001 schoolyear, it is essential to consider what will be needed to a) create greater capacity for reform where it does not yet exist, and b) sustain the capacity of higher functioning schools.[58] With this in mind, we offer the following conclusions and suggestions for further supporting the work of Cohort I and II schools.

Recommendations.

1. Schools that are Type 1 or Type 2 with respect to their ILT and LASW groups are those types for different reasons.

- For example, one school might have a principal who refuses to change her interaction patterns with teachers in order to enable them to take a leadership roles on the ILT; another might have a principal who wants to change her ILT interaction patterns, but, despite coaching, does not know how to do so; and/or another school might have a principal who does not value the basic ideas of the reform and/or considers too great the personal costs of making the requisite changes. A few principals, whether by disposition or level of leadership skill, have no strategies with which to address teachers who refuse to participate in the whole-school change effort. This absence of principal leadership prevents the entire school from moving forward. It frustrates the teacher leaders and other teachers who seek to engage their colleagues in improving teaching and learning. In some of these schools, WSC coaches have tried valiantly to assist principals who did not change; in others coaching has been sporadic due to a) decisions made by the principal and/or b) coach changes due to attrition, for example. Finally, some coaching efforts may have failed because the principal does not have the requisite capacity or desire to take on the reform agenda.

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[58] We know that the BPE-BAC has completed its own analysis of the status of Cohort I schools, in particular, and has been considering how to support schools at different levels of implementation. Education Matters' analysis, done independently of the BPE-BAC analysis, supports their findings which were shared at the Annenberg Working Group meeting on June 22, 2000. We hope our elaboration of the findings and suggestions contribute to the work that is underway.

- Some schools with Type 1 and 2 ILTs and LASW groups are in these categories because a good number of teachers resist involvement with reform. The reasons for resistance vary. For example, some teachers are not interested in being part of the collaborative, collegial, instructionally focused culture that the reform is pressing them to create because they do not believe it will lead to improved student achievement. Others fear losing the autonomy they have always had. Still others worry that if they engage in the reform activities, they will lose some of their union advantages and be asked to do even more work. Some teachers resist because they are made nervous by the prospect of having to expose their work and, in a sense, be held accountable by their colleagues for addressing areas in which they need to improve. The fact that their colleagues will be engaged with them in similar work does not make the proposed reform strategies any more palatable. And some teachers, like some principals, simply do not want to put out the effort required to make the changes demanded by the reform. The reality of teacher resistance, which can be coupled with the kinds of ineffective principal leadership described above, stymies schoolwide, instructional reform. It thwarts the efforts of coaches and frustrates the teachers who want to make changes but have no organizational or peer support to do so.

The variation in the factors that are associated with being a school with Type 1 or 2 ILT and LASW groups suggests that, to be effective, intervention strategies need to be designed with the factors in mind. We suggest that the BPE-BAC and BPS, when it designs its intervention strategies, follow the path they are urging schools to take when they collect and analyze students' performance-based assessment data:

1. **Carefully collect data that will identify the factors influencing each school's implementation status.** In collecting such data, we caution the BPE-BAC and BPS about relying too heavily on available IDR data for this purpose. While it may be used as one source of data, we know that some Type 1 and 2 ILT and LASW schools received, in our view, undeserved plaudits for their LASW groups and other aspects of their implementation of the Essentials. Teachers in such schools, for example, reported that they convened their LASW groups solely for the IDR site visit. In addition, we are not convinced that all written coach reports convey the shortcomings coaches know exist at some of the schools. Perhaps, additional oral coach debriefings would help the BPE-BAC and BPS develop targeted intervention strategies.

2. **Develop intervention strategies that are targeted to the factors identified by the data collection.** For example, our analysis reveals that principals and teachers in these schools have less knowledge of the conceptual underpinnings of the reform and the links between its parts. Interventions should include attention to this fact. Additionally, it will

not be sufficient to propose, for example, that these schools receive more coaching support. Rather, it will be important to specify the exact focus of the coaching and select a coach who is skillful in what is needed. Then, it will be essential to establish benchmarks for progress and a semi-annual accountability system that ensures principals' and teachers' involvement in the requisite work, and uses data to target needs and develop "next steps."

3. **Resist the urge to develop more prescribed, "dumbed-down" interventions that eviscerate the core components of the Essentials.** It may be tempting to figure out ways to simplify the demands of the current reform with the belief that such changes could lead to better and swifter implementation. In our view, this approach to the problems presented by schools with Type 1 and 2 ILTs and LASW groups will be ineffective because it will not engage teachers and principals in the joint work that could enable them to develop the understanding needed for full implementation.

4. It will not always be clear how to help principals and teachers who have not been helped by the professional development opportunities provided during the last four years. But, it will be essential to avoid the mistake of merely intensifying these schools' exposure to more of the same. **Therefore, we suggest that the BPE-BAC and BPS work collaboratively to develop instructional strategies that reflect "best practices" for the organizational as well as instructional development of these schools.**

2. Schools that have worked diligently and created Type 3 and 4 ILTs and LASW groups need support to sustain and enhance what they have accomplished. The schools' accomplishments are fragile for a number of reasons.

- In schools with Type 3 ILTs and LASW groups, a core group of teachers and the principal currently spearhead reform. The departure of one or more of these individuals could leave the school with a much weakened capacity. For example, a change in principal leadership could result in the school having leadership that is less expert than the leadership that enabled them to reach Type 3. Similarly, the transfer of teacher leaders could leave the school without key capacity with respect to, for example, leading LASW groups and sustaining the literacy focus. The combination of a change in principal and the transfer of several key teachers could put the school back at a very early stage of reform.

- Schools with Type 3 and Type 4 ILTs and LASW groups are also fragile with respect to this status because, even where many teachers share responsibility and leadership for reform, these schools have nearly reached the end of their capacity to take on more and more complicated work within the time constraints of the current school day. Simply put, they have run out of time. In Type 3 and 4 elementary schools, in particular, as teachers begin to take on the work associated with the implementation of mathematics reform, they may find themselves substantially over-committed. One result might be a loss of their attention to the ongoing professional development associated with literacy programs. This would be a reasonable but unfortunate adjustment because, even in these schools, all teachers are not yet expert with respect to literacy and the programs are not fully implemented. In fact, in some schools there are teachers who are not yet completely trained in the literacy program. The impact of expanding the reform to mathematics may be felt most by small schools that have reached Type 4 and have run out of teachers who have time available for additional leadership responsibilities. In such schools, the demands on principals as well (who have no administrative support due to small size), may outstrip their capacity to focus on additional aspect of whole-school improvement.

- In schools with Type 3 LASW groups (and in some schools with Type 4 LASW groups), coaches play a critical role in convening the LASW groups and facilitating their discussions. Although these schools have some teachers who can effectively lead the groups, the coach remains essential to their further development and to the development of these facilitation skills in additional teachers. The absence of a coach, due to BPE-BAC funding priorities, could halt the progress these schools have made.[59]

As a result of these conditions, we suggest that the BPE-BAC and BPS consider carefully how to provide further support to schools that have achieved Type 3 and 4 ILT and LASW groups.

- **It might be possible to enable these schools to use time and human resources differently in order to structure teacher leaders' work.** For example, it might be possible to consider structuring some teachers' jobs so that they can teach students part of the day and coach their colleagues and prepare professional development during another part of the day. In light of the real demands of Boston's reform agenda, we think it is time for the BPE-BAC and the district to face the constraints built-in to the school day as a result of its current length and organization and consider testing some alternative solutions.[60] The reforms place great demands on teachers and even those who want to make the changes are frustrated and exhausted by trying to implement them within the structure of the current school day.

- **With respect to coaching teachers to become facilitators of LASW (and ILT) groups, we think it would be helpful to provide coaches with professional development focused on how to accomplish this task.** Some coaches already are skillful in this regard and could be used as resources for their colleagues. We imagine that such work would involve, for example, a) a pre-conference with the teacher facilitator prior to the LASW session, b) coach observation of the session, and c) a post-LASW session debriefing. If coaches are to add this to their responsibilities, however, they will have to reduce their attention elsewhere. Therefore, we think it would be advisable to work with the coaches to plan their priorities for a) sustaining the direct support to teachers that they currently provide, and b) adding time to coach school-based LASW facilitators.

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[59] Some of these schools would also benefit from additional coach support for their ILT work.

[60] We recognize that there may need to be discussions with the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) in order to go forward with such changes.

In addition, it will be essential to develop principal support for these kinds of teacher leadership. Without principal support, teachers will lack the authority to serve in these positions. Some principals will be eager to learn how to support their teacher leaders. Others, we suspect, will be less willing to follow the advice of the coaches or cede real authority to teacher leaders.

3. These findings have implications for the scale-up strategies put in place by the BPE-BAC and the BPS. Scale-up should be designed in light of the extent and quality of schools' implementation to date based a careful analysis of what has led to this status. Next steps in implementation should insure that the groundwork for school improvement – well-functioning ILTs and LASW groups – has been established before schools are required to implement additional components of reform that depend on the existence of well-functioning ILTs and LASW groups. With this in mind, we note the following:

- **The scale-up of performance assessments was undertaken without sufficient consideration of the demands of this work on the district and on the schools and preparation for implementation.** As a result, all schools had difficulty with implementation. Some of the difficulties would have been avoided if there had been more careful planning of this component of reform prior to its roll-out.

- **In retrospect, it was not advisable to require implementation of performance assessments in schools that had weak ILTs and LASW groups (Type 1/2). These schools lacked the principal leadership and organizational capacity needed for reasonable implementation of this component of the reform.** Adding the requirement of performance assessments to schools that had not developed their ILTs and LASW groups a) did not enable them to develop these structures, and b) required them to implement assessments without sufficient capacity.

- **As a result of what we have learned about scaling-up the reform, it would serve the schools, the teachers and the children well for the BPS and the BPE-BAC to consider carefully schools' extant development of the reform, what they need to do next in order to extend their development, and support that development prior to expanding the array of demands on the schools.** For example, it may have been advisable to have intensively supported schools in implementing their ILTs and LASW groups prior to having them implement performance assessments. It is certainly advisable, now, to make sure that schools with Type 1 and 2 ILTs and LASW groups have the support they need to rapidly and effectively establish these components before taking on additional work. This can only be done if the BPS takes seriously the need to understand **why** these schools failed to implement the components in the first place and insures that the conditions that led to the failure are remedied or removed.

In concluding this report, we return to the beginning to remind readers that the reform designed by the BPE in conjunction with the BPS and adopted by the BAC and BPS has an underlying theory that grows out of a strong research base and has two premises: 1) improved instruction will improve student achievement, and 2) the way to improve instruction is to support teachers at their school sites as they learn in collaboration with one another. In the BPE-BAC, collaborative learning is facilitated by asking teachers and principals to engage in specific activities, called Essentials, which, when undertaken with skillful support, help educators work together in such a way that they come to share common language, common expert instructional practices, and common goals for their students. The reform is designed to change the instructional culture of schools so that teachers no longer work in isolation from one another but rather participate in a variety of instructionally focused organizational structures. Chief among these are the Instructional Leadership Teams and the Looking at Student Work groups. The BPE-BAC and the BPS have evidence to suggest that they are on the right track with implementing Boston's theory of whole-school improvement. Now, it is time to further enhance the work of the schools that have most successfully implemented the reform, and to determine quickly how to accelerate implementation in those that have not yet made genuine progress.

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Corporate Source: Education Matters, Inc	Publication Date: July 2000

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